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THE COMMUNIST

. X JUNE, 1931 No. 6

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Musteism — "Left" Demagogy a la Mode

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

AS capitalism plunges deeper and deeper into crisis, and as the workers under press of increasingly intolerable conditions rapidly become radicalized and begin to get into motion, the employers in all capitalist countries develop a wide use of the most blatant "left" demagogy to hold them in check. The efficacy of this method is due to the fact that undeveloped sections of the workers, eager for action against the capitalists, tend to accept this demagogy at its face value as indicating a developing struggle, whereas, in reality, it aims at the paralysis and betrayal of the workers' struggle.

Thus the various brands of defenders of capitalism—not only social fascists, but also fascists and other openly capitalist elements —are making liberal use of "left" phrase-mongering to cover up their reactionary programs and to confuse and demoralize the workers. Rightly, the Comintern singles out this tendency as a serious danger and calls upon its Parties ruthlessly to expose and combat it.

This "left" demagogy is as widespread as the capitalist crisis. It is to be found in all the capitalist countries. Its most insidious forms are those developed among the social fascists, such as the Maxton-Cook group in Great Britain, and the "left" social democrats in Germany.

Of course, American capitalist society, subject to the general laws of capitalist development, exhibits a characteristic growth of "left" phrase-mongering. Even outspoken capitalist politicians of the Mayor Murphy of Detroit stripe cover up with pretenses of radicalism their program of starving the unemployed. Likewise, fascist labor leaders such as Green and Woll present Hoover's stagger plan in the guise of the six-hour day, and make hypocritical gestures about fighting wage cuts. But the most typical and dangerous of the present luxuriant crop of "radical" demagogy is that of the so-called Muste group, or Conference for Progressive Labor Action. In the C. P. L. A. "left" phrase-mongering is to be found in its most extreme and insidious forms which fit in easily with the phrase-mongering of Green and Co.

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THE C. P. L. A.

The C. P. L. A., headed by the former Reverend A. J. Muste, originated out of the Brookwood School-*Labor Age* group. It was definitely organized in May, 1929. The C. P. L. A. is the Socialist Party force in the trade union field. Its leading group is overwhelmingly dominated by Socialist Party members. It includes such right-wing Socialist Party leaders as Thomas, O'Neal, and Maurer. But its controlling forces lean more to the so-called "left" Stanley group of the S. P.

Besides these definite S. P. elements, there are affiliated to the top leadership a heterogeneous collection of lesser trade union bureaucrats, remnants of Farmer-Labor Party leaders, Brookwood intellectuals, "radical" Liberals, dilettante churchmen, social workers, and the like. And, working closer and closer with Muste, are the renegade groups from Communism of Lore, Lovestone, Cannon, and Weisbord.

The Muste group has already developed a considerable following in the trade unions. The C. P. L. A. has the general support of the needle unions controlled by the S. P. It practically controls the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers, and exerts a big influence in the United Textile Workers generally. It is the sponsor of the Howatt new miners' union, and it has considerable backing among the machinists, printing trades, and in various local central bodies.

C. P. L. A. PROGRAM

During the period of the high Coolidge "prosperity," the Brookwood group under Muste's leadership, like the "progressives" generally in the labor movement, were typical advocates of the B. & O. Plan, labor banking, and the whole rationalization program of the employers and the trade union leaders, with characteristic "progressive" phrases. They looked with indifference or hostility upon the bitter struggle of the old T. U. E. L. in the various unions against these class collaboration policies, with their accompanying terrorism in the unions and flagrant betrayal of the workers.

But now these Muste elements, without changing their basic line of class collaboration, find it necessary to obscure their reactionary position by a bright red dress of radical phrases. Seeing the mass drift of the radicalized workers toward the leadership of the Communist Party and the Trade Union Unity League, they characteristically attempt to stop this tendency by the use of "left" phrase-mongering. They "swipe" from the old T. U. E. L. program a whole series of slogans. Their stated program includes

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amalgamation, labor party, trade union democracy, release of political prisoners, industrial unionism, defense of the Soviet Union. They even openly try to steal the T. U. E. L. tradition as the opposition in the A. F. of L.

The Musteites also begin to talk of dual unionism. They declare that where the old unions are non-existent or incapable of leading the struggle, new industrial unions must be founded. Moreover, Muste also begins to speak of the "probable" necessity of violence in the class struggle, and vaguely suggests the "possibility" of an eventual dictatorship of the proletariat. Muste also questions the advisability of the labor party slogan, hints at a split in the S. P., and says that if there were an "intelligent Communist Party" in the United States it would fill the workers' present needs for a political Party.

C. P. L. A. PRACTICE

But the experience of the C. P. L. A. in actual life shows that all this "radicalism" is only so much talk, designed to confuse the workers and to draw them into the control of the A. F. of L. and S. P. reactionaries. The life and activities of the C. P. L. A. demonstrate that the Musteites are only specialized sections of the A. F. of L.-S. P. bureaucracies.

Beneath Muste's thin veneer of "left" phrases is his real policy of solving the capitalist crisis by organizing capitalist production, of union-management cooperation, of a united front with A. F. of L. reactionaries, of underhanded knifing of the Soviet Union, of support of A. F. of L. Jim Crowism, of advocating militant-pacifism, of sabotage of the fight against wage cuts and unemployment.

In the South Muste and his organizers worked hand in glove with Green and MacMahon to betray the textile workers, Muste's special tasks there being to organize the workers with his radical talk and then to help Green and Company callously sell them out by the notorious gentlemen's agreements in Elizabethton, Marion, and Danville. In the needle trades Muste applauded the whole strike-breaking, company-unionizing policies of the S. P. leaders. In the Illinois mine fields he made a united front with the labor crooks, Farrington, Fishwick, and Walker against the National Miners Union. Everywhere in the class struggle that the C. P. L. A. plays a role, it shows itself to be a conscious aid to the A. F. of L. bureaucracy and an aggressive enemy of the T. U. U. L. unions.

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DANGER OF MUSTEISM

The Musteites are attempting to do again what has been done by similar fake "left" movements in past crises. The damage wrought by the treasons of the Second-and-a-Half International elements in the post-war revolutionary upheavals in Germany; the sabotage of the British general strike by the Purcell-Hicks-Cook "lefts"; the betrayals by the Fitzpatricks, Hillmans, and other "progressives" in this country, are too fresh in our minds for us to mistake the character or to ignore the menace of such "left" phrase-mongering tendencies in the present crisis.

The Muste movement presents a real danger to the T. U. U. L. unions. It is a menace both within the old unions and among the unorganized. As the masses of workers, both A. F. of L. and unorganized workers, awaken and begin to struggle, there is a grave danger that many of them will fall victims to Muste's phrases. There is already a strong tendency to develop so-called "middle" movements between the T. U. U. L. and the A. F. of L. proper —such as outlaw strikes, independent unions, which the T. U. U. L. does not control. Such movements are the happy hunting grounds of Musteism, which tends inevitably to destroy their militancy and to direct them under A. F. of L. control.

The Muste movement also constitutes a direct danger to the Communist Party itself. It is not simply a trade union group; it has its immediate political phases. The C. P. L. A. offers a convenient program for rallying, not only the so-called "left" Stanleyites in the S. P., but also the various renegade groups from Communism of Lovestoneites, Cannonites, Loreites. Already they have a pretty definite united front on the trade union question. Whether or not hese elements will acually form a new S. P. (Second-and-a-Half International brand) as they hint, or simply conduct their activities inside of and upon the fringe of the S. P., is not decisively important. What is important is that their "left" phrase-mongery —which affects also more advanced workers—directly hampers the work of our Party.

MUSTEISM MUST BE FOUGHT

The fight of the Party and the T. U. U. L. against Musteism must be intensified. There has been somewhat of a tendency to underestimate the danger of this insidious development. This has played into Muste's hands. And especially the neglect of this work in the A. F. of L. has facilitated the growth of his movement —it has enabled the C. P. L. A. to pose, with a show of justification, as the opposition movement within the A. F. of L.

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The attitude of the Party and the T. U. U. L. toward Musteism must be one of open and militant struggle. But there must be a differentiation between the C. P. L. A. leaders, and the rank and file elements who want to fight capitalism but who are misled by Musteism's fake radicalism. Towards the Musteite leaders the policy must be one of constant pressure and struggle. Towards honest workers under the C. P. L. A. influence, the policy must be the united front from below, against the common enemy.

To fight Musteism, a persistent exposure of it as a "left" maneuver of the A. F. of L. is basically necessary. But this, in itself, is not enough. The whole program of the T. U. U. L. must be pushed aggressively. In first line, the fight against Musteism develops on the trade union field. Opposition groups must be built in the old unions; the basic work of organizing the unorganized must be prosecuted vigorously. The whole movement must be built on a militant fight for the partial demands of the workers, with the maximum broadening and deepening of the struggle. As this is done the reactionary character of Musteism will be exposed and its leaders clearly shown to be part of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy and strike-breaking machinery of the bosses.

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The Course of the Economic Crisis in the United States

By HARRY GANNES

WHAT is the outlook for the present economic crisis in the United States? The development of the crisis in this country cannot for a moment be separated from the world crisis. American capitalism contains within itself nearly 50 per cent of world capitalist economy and an examination of the specific features of the crisis in the United States is important for an estimation of the course of the world crisis. Then, too, we have the assurance of the capitalist economists, German and British as well as American, that a world upturn will have its origin in the United States.

We are beginning to get some unusual admissions of the depth of the present world crisis from sources which gave quite a different picture a year or two ago. Secretary of Commerce Robert P. Lamont, speaking before the annual convention of Chamber of Commerce of the United States in the latter part of April declared that the present crisis in the United States is the worst in its history. Keynes, the British economist, in a radio speech from London to the United States warns the American capitalists not to look for "normal times" for five years to come.

John Moody, president of Moody's Investors Service, a very optimistic gentleman, who in 1930 could say, "I am not inclined to believe that 1930 will turn out to be as poor a year as most of the pessimistic prophets appear to think," now has this to say:

> "I doubt very much whether we can be back to normal times, such as we had five or six years ago, until some time in 1932 or 1933."[1]

Significant fact about Mr. Moody's prophecy is that "normal times" to him means a recession to the period of 1926-27, not an advance sweep with a perspective of continuous growth.

In the same article Mr. Moody lets us into a fact heretofore not admitted, and that is that the stock market crash did not suddenly precipitate a crisis in October of 1929, but that ever since May, of 1929, capitalist industry had hit a snag; that while production was

[1] New York *Evening Post*, Financial Section, May 2, 1931.

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sweeping upward at a furious pace there were no outlets for the commodities produced and a huge amount of overproduced goods piled up.

> "The business depression," he writes, "has now lasted nearly two years as business was undoubtedly beginning to fall off in the country as far back as May, 1929. No one recognized it at that time, but if we look back we will see that car loadings began to fall off in that month and have been declining ever since."

One more quotation from Mr. Moody as it has important significance in tracing the possible future course of the crisis:

> "For seven or eight years this country was expanding its production and its plant capacity, investing enormous sums in construction and equipping itself for supplying a far greater demand for goods than the world under our present system could possibly consume in normal times."

The history of the present crisis up to the spring of 1931 is pretty clear. Every branch of production in the basic industries suffered severe curtailment. Over 10,000,000 workers were thrown onto the streets without work. The agrarian crisis which had never been solved since the close of the world war entered a sharper phase and still shows no signs of slackening. Exports and imports dropped precipitously. Commodity prices fell and are now within a few per cent of pre-war levels, with every prospect of continuing their downward course for some time.

During the spring of 1931 there was a slight upturn in production in steel, automobiles, building construction, textiles and a few other industries. Most of the capitalists took this as a sign of the slow upward turn of capitalist economy. It was not to be, however, and the month of April saw an abrupt end to the weak seasonal upturn. The seasonal rise was of a type similar to that of the spring of 1930 which inspired Hoover to one of his 60-day prosperity predictions.

Production in all the basic industries is now again on the decline. Steel production which never got well above 52 per cent of capacity is now going down to near 40 per cent. Reports of the United States Steel Corporation indicate that not only is production declining but orders on hand for steel are *dropping* faster. On May 1, 1931, Eugene G. Grace, president of the Bethlehem Steel Corp. warned stockholders that "new orders for steel have fallen off appreciably during the last few weeks, and at the present time I do not see anything to indicate a pickup in the steel industry in the near future.

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"I do not want to start a scare, but I just don't see any promise of any early improvement."[2]

The automobile industry is slackening its operations materially. The mainstay of the automobile industry, the Ford Co., is making the sharpest reductions. The financial journals report that the Ford Co. will close down completely during the summer as Ford has overproduced and is unable to market the cars on hand. During the first week in May the Ford Co. plants went on a three-day and after several months' operation on a four-day week. During the last week in April, Ford reduced output by 5,000 cars a week.

The building industry is entering a severe phase of renewed crisis. For the first three weeks of April, the F. W. Dodge Corporation, leading building construction statisticians, reported that the daily rate of building contracts showed a decline of 24 per cent from the March daily average, in place of the normal seasonal gain of 10.7 per cent. "By present signs, therefore," says the *Annalist* (May 1, 1931), "the April building contracts record had as sharp a rise and as steep a descent as steel ingot production had in its brief Spring peak."

There is little doubt that the results of building construction for the year 1931 will be far below any year of the present crisis. There are two main reasons for this. (1) There is overproduction in building that cannot be absorbed for several years, even if there were no building at all beyond repairs. (2) A good deal of the construction during 1929-30 was stimulated by public building works, but this has ended. There is a deficit in the national treasury amounting to nearly a billion dollars, and Hoover's main point of attack is cutting down on public construction works not connected with the army and naval armaments. The city and state governments are entering periods of retrenchments because the bourgeoisie protest against any increase in taxes for public building construction. In fact, they demand reduction in taxes in order to be able to tide them over the present crisis.

Thus, in a general way, we get the picture that the crisis shows signs of still further deepening.

There are two new phases of the crisis now developing of exceptional importance. They are: (1) The intensified wage cutting drive; and (2) the marked drop in profits of all of the important capitalist corporations. The United States Steel Corporation showed an earning of 5 cents a share of common stock for the first quarter of 1931, when the usual quarterly dividend payment is $1.75. The usual dividend was declared. However, this is temporarily marking

[2] *World-Telegram*, May 1, 1931.

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time, an attempt to stave off the full significance of the drop in profits. That there will be a continuous drop from now on is admitted by the New York *Sun* (April 29, 1931) when it says:

> "Lower dividend rates and omissions will make a sharp cut in the May 1 disbursements on approximately 600 important stock issues, but investors this time probably will receive more than they will get in succeeding quarters for the next two or three years at least."

We are in that stage described by Marx as follows:

> "So long as everything goes well, competition effects a practical brotherhood of the capitalist class, as we have seen in the case of the average rate of profit, so that each shares in the common loot in proportion to the magnitude of his share of investment. But as soon as it is no longer a question of sharing profits, but sharing losses, every one tries to reduce his own share to a minimum and load as much as possible upon the shoulders of some other competitor."[3]

We see this process going on in many directions—in the furious court battle over the merger of the Bethlehem Steel Co. and the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co.; in the revived struggle by the petty bourgeois, the so-called insurgent capitalist politicians against the "trusts"; attacks against the Federal Farm Board's attempts to save losses of grain speculators, etc.

But the most drastic attack in the face of the loss of profits is carried on against the working class in the form of a concerted national drive against wages. While wages were reduced $12,000,000,000 in 1930 this was a mere appetizer for the capitalists. Looking ahead to lowered profits for the next two or three years, they unite in their efforts to recoup a great part of the loss by lowering the standard of living of the workers, by squeezing more surplus value out of them, and by generally attempting to transfer the burdens of the crisis onto the backs of the toiling masses.

All these facts are admitted by the capitalists themselves. *The Business Week*, a Wall Street mouthpiece, on April 11, 1931, gave the inside story of wage cuts, and how the bosses view them.

> "Information gathered by *The Business Week* indicates:
> (1) Wage cuts have been considerably more widespread than is generally realized.
> (2) Many employers feel they cannot maintain wage rates much longer; a marked increase in wage cuts accelerating still further the trend of the year, appears almost inevitable."

It becomes a snowball process, gathering momentum with each

[3] *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 297.

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downward sweep. "The further it goes, the bigger it gets and the harder it is to stop. Many think wage cutting is already past the controllable stage; that it must go on to the bitter end."

The talk that wages must be cut to catch up with the fall in prices of retail commodities is a pack of lies and so recognized by the capitalists themselves. Living costs, according to the National Industrial Conference Board, declined 13 per cent since October, 1929; but the average earnings of labor dropped 20 per cent. So wage cutting takes place on the base of a reduction of real wages of 7 per cent, according to the data of the leading capitalist statistical organization.

What are the perspectives of the crisis?

American economy, in my judgment, will not act as a lever for the solution of the world crisis. All the factors which made for the crisis—overproduction, agrarian crisis, rationalization, growth of the productive forces, contraction of the markets—are contained in a more concentrated form in the United States than in any other capitalist country.

The agrarian crisis in the United States will not be solved even temporarily on a capitalist base. In this respect there is an insoluble, chronic agrarian crisis. The immense overproduction of agrarian products (wheat, cotton, etc.) in the United States, aggravated by an artificial price structure (a spread between agrarian prices in the United States and on the world market); the greater disparity between the prices of industrial and agrarian commodities in the United States; the growth of agriculture in the Soviet Union, Canada, Argentina, and their closer relation to the world market, eliminate the possibility of a temporary solution of the American agrarian crisis within the capitalist structure.

This acts as a heavy drag on the general economic crisis in the United States. Furthermore, the crisis in industry is entering deeper levels. The seasonal upturn in the spring of 1931 was of a very weak and wavering nature, followed by much sharper declines in the basic industries than in 1930. That every factor points to a further deepening of the crisis is admitted by such conservative agencies as *Dunn's Review*:

> "The accumulation of evidence points more to a continuance of the decline in general business activity than to any perceptible slackening in the rate of recession."[4]

The contradictions of American capitalism, inner and outer, are being sharpened by the continuation and deepening of the world

[4] New York *Times*, May 9, 1931, p. 32.

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economic crisis. Unemployment continues to grow despite the lies about improvements. Wage cuts increase. The danger of war between the imperialist powers and against the Soviet Union is spurred on by the sharpening crisis.

The wage cutting drive will be extended by the capitalists in order to keep up their declining profits. All the talk of Mellon, Hoover, Lamont, and other capitalist politicians and spokesmen about "maintaining wages" as a policy is ridiculous and hypocritical. The individual capitalist concerns, the large trusts, the banks directly interwoven with the leading industries, cut wages without regard to a general principle of either maintaining or reducing wages. As prices ebb they look to wages as the first means of stopping the gap. As prices of commodities drop, the cry becomes "lower cost of production!" The first "cost" lowered is wages. In this manner the capitalists actually transfer the burdens of the crisis on the backs of the workers. At the same time exploitation is increased, more surplus value is squeezed out of the workers who still retain jobs.

This method of "solving" the crisis has its immediate effect on the working class if not on the crisis. A sharp counter-attack by the workers must immediately be mobilized to resist the growing wage cut drive which gains momentum with every report of lowering profits.

Since we already have the admission that profits will continue to drop for the next two or three years, the attack against the standard of living of the workers will continue. The conclusion of one wage cut is no guarantee against another cut in wages. By the "snipping" process, fully agreed to by Hoover and the other capitalists who "deplore" an open process of wage cutting, the capitalists have thus far achieved a national wage cut without a frontal attack against the working class which would precipitate widespread class battles.

Unless a determined fight is undertaken by the working class against the continuous process of open and covert wage cutting the capitalist class will continue to unload more and more of the burdens of the crisis (as they accumulate) on the workers, and in this way slowly shove themselves out of the lower levels of the crisis.

American capitalism depends for 90 per cent of its output on the inner market. With the vast impoverishment of the agrarian and proletarian masses this market is severely curtailed. Now that wage cuts are coming down in an avalanche, this market will be further narrowed to a serious extent. This fact is taken into account by many capitalist economists who do not relish the wage cutting drive that is now proceeding because they see it will increase the struggles

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of the workers against capitalism and fail of its object—the solution of the crisis.

American industry is based on mass production, and it is difficult to set this machinery in motion profitably to the capitalists without mass markets, hence the drive for world markets when world markets are constantly narrowing.

One of the attempted solutions of the crisis is to push rationalization, increasing the rate of exploitation to a frightful rate, thereby increasing unemployment, and laying the basis for overproduction and the general sharpening of the basic antagonisms of capitalism. This recalls what Marx said about capitalism's attempts to overcome its barriers:

> "Capitalist production is continually engaged in the attempt to overcome these immanent barriers (basic antagonisms, and crises) but it overcomes them only by means which again place the same barriers in its way in a more formidable size."[5]

This is precisely what is happening in the United States today. Any attempted solution of the crisis in this sphere, step by step increase overproduction, forces prices still lower, narrows the rate of profit, and lays the basis for still worse crises in the future. We repeat Mr. Moody's words, that the productive machinery in the United States is expanded "for supplying a far greater demand for goods than the world under our present system could possibly consume in normal times." In abnormal times, such as we have now, it is a very unwieldy apparatus.

So far as the world market is concerned the leading capitalist countries are in the position described by Engels many years ago when he referred to the growing competition of Britain, the United States, and Germany:

> "For if there are three countries (say England, America and Germany) competing on comparatively equal terms for the possession of the World Market, there is no chance but chronic overproduction, one of the three being capable of supplying the whole quantity required."[6]

The exceptionally high tariff has placed American imperialism in a disadvantageous position in the struggle for the markets at a time when markets are for it a question of life and death.

War looms closer and closer as a "way out" to the capitalists in the present crisis. It would destroy the huge overproduction; it

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[5] *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 293.

[6] Letter to Mrs. Wischnewetzky, London, Feb. 3, 1886.

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would smash a great amount of over-produced means of production; it would be an attempt to decide the question of markets and the redivision of colonies; it would be directed against the Soviet Union, recognized by the capitalists as one of the greatest obstacles in solving the world economic crisis of capitalism; it would offer a better means of attack against the working class by strengthening the open dictatorship of the capitalist state. Yet at the same time the growing class consciousness of the workers, the increasing revolutionary struggles throughout the world, the growing popularity among the workers of the Five-Year Plan because it demonstrates the success of socialist economy as against capitalist crisis, are contrary factors which keep the capitalists for the moment from grasping this "way out."

War and wage cuts are becoming more and more avenues that the capitalists look to in the hope of ending the crisis. Through both means the pressure against the working class is sharpened. Expenditures for war in the United States have reached the highest levels at the same moment that wage cutting drives get their strongest impetus.

American capitalism has an overproduction, not only of commodities of consumption, but of capital in the means of production, as well as potential capital—vast sums of uninvested funds that can find no means of employment.

There is still inflation in securities (stocks, bonds, mortgages, etc.) in the United States which acts as a drag on the productive machinery, causing a large number of bank failures, continuous stock market crashes, swindles, speculation, adding to the anarchy of the crisis. The stock market decline is not near its end, and while it is a reflection of the crisis of the productive forces, it in turn becomes one of the factors in intensifying the economic crisis by forcing thousands of small stockholders into bankruptcy, disturbing the position of the banks, lessening confidence in capitalism generally, and leading to a serious crisis in the credit system.

We will soon get more admissions from capitalist spokesmen that the present crisis will last at least until 1932-1933. In this matter the time element becomes an important factor in the crisis because in 1932 presidential elections take place. In this situation, with the growth of the sharpness of the class struggle, the struggle of the bourgeoisie over the share of declining profits, the growing militancy of the poor farmers, will speed up the political consciousness of the masses. There will be an intensified struggle against capitalism and its attempt to transfer the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the workers and poor farmers.

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Even in the "best" periods the capitalists say they become "disturbed" in presidential election years.

The issues in the 1932 election, with the crisis by that time having lasted in chronic form for nearly four years, will see tremendous movements, discussion, alliances and battles over the basic issues of capitalism—unemployment, crises, wage cuts, unemployment insurance, imperialism, the agrarian crisis. The growing resistance of the workers will make it more and more difficult for the capitalists to work out their solution by unloading on the working class the full effects of the crisis.

The continuation of the crisis in the United States for this long period of time will have its effects in the colonial countries intimately connected with American imperialism, such as Latin America, the Philippines and China.

All of these perspectives do not leave out of account the possibility of an upturn in production in all industries beyond the present low figures. It does, however, preclude the possibility of production at the levels of the years 1928-1930, which means a distinct interruption in the growth of American imperialism. It means that production, if it does increase, will do so with a definite growth in the permanent army of the unemployed. There will be not less than between five and seven million permanently unemployed, with their ranks constantly added to. It will proceed with a wholesale lowering of the standard of living of the American workers, and the inevitable battles that will take place against this process.

In short, American imperialism is now experiencing not only its worst crisis but its longest, one that marks its period of decline with unmistakable signs.

It is now clear that in the United States the immediate perspective is not the development of a political crisis but the further intensification of the economic crisis with a sharpening of the class struggle on all fronts. Yet the deepening economic crisis in the United States is linked up with the revolutionary crises in Latin America and in several of the European countries as well as in China and India.

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The Theoretical Defenders of White Chauvinism in the Labor Movement

By HARRY HAYWOOD

THE correctness of the program of the Communist International on the Negro Question is conclusively proven in the present crisis by the response of the Negro masses to the slogans of the Party, and by their increasing participation together with the white workers in joint struggles against the capitalist offensive. It is likewise proven by the vicious repressive measures of the ruling classes against the activities of the Communist Party and other revolutionary organizations among Negroes.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the revolutionary program of the Communist Party is meeting the sharpest attacks, particularly at the present time, on the part of all chauvinist forces from the Fish Committee down to the Lovestone renegades.

It is precisely in this light, then, that we must regard the vicious attacks of the Lovestoneites upon the line of the Party and the C. I. as contained in recent numbers of the (counter) *Revolutionary Age*, organ of these renegades.

ARE THE NEGROES A NATION?

The author of these articles, one Will Herberg, armed with pseudo-Marxian phrases, deliberately distorts quotations, confuses formulations, and with a profound air of Marxian "learning" launches a "devastating" attack upon the recent C. I. resolution.

According to this "theoretician," the Negroes in the Black Belt have no *right* to aspire to national liberation because they do not constitute a nation. Herberg asks, "Do the Negroes constitute a nation in the same sense in which the Croatians, Ukranians, or Greeks do?" Our "learned" theoretician then proceeds to answer this by quoting the Leninist definition given by Stalin who, Herberg sneeringly admits, "writes quite well on this question." Stalin's quotation reads as follows:

"A nation is an historically developed community of people with

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> a common language, territory, economic life, and an historical tradition reflecting itself in a common culture."

Herberg then proceeds to make a very non-Leninist, schematic application of this correct formula to the situation of the Negroes in the U. S. A., consequently arriving at the conclusion that "to maintain such a position (*i. e.*, that the Negroes are a nation) is possible only for those who know absolutely nothing of the situation of the Negro masses in this country." Let us examine more closely the premise for this false conclusion. This is to be seen in the following quotation from Herberg's article:

> "Have the American Negroes a community of language, territory, economic life, psychic structure, as *distinct* from the white peoples? . . . Even the most enthusiastic of the official theoreticians will not insist upon a special Negro language."

We find that our theoretician has made a little amendment to the correct Leninist definition of Stalin's by adding the words "special" and "distinct." It is obviously in these two words that the crux of his confusion lies. It is clear that Herberg confuses common language, common culture, and common economic ties with *separate and distinct* language, cultural and economic ties.

On the question of language: If Herberg had read Stalin a little further, he would have found that "a common language for every nation is necessary, but a *different* language for every nation is not necessary." (Emphasis mine—H. H. From a pamphlet, *Marxism and the National Question*, Russian edition.) For example, it is quite clear that Great Britain and the United States are two distinct nations, and yet both Englishmen and Americans speak one and the same language. It is also clear that the Negroes have a common language, despite the fact that their language, English, is the same as that of their oppressors.

On the question of economic life and culture: Can it be seriously maintained that the Ukranians had a distinct economic life from that of the Great Russians? Our Leninism teaches us that the epoch of imperialism or finance capitalism is distinguished, among other things, by the penetration of capitalist relations into the most remote corners of the earth, and also the drawing in of the most backward peoples into the sphere of world market relations, *i. e.*, into the general imperialist system. It is therefore absurd, in the epoch of imperialism, *i. e.*, in the period of world market relations, to speak about economic ties among an oppressed people as "distinct" in the sense of separate, from those of the oppressing nation. Common economic ties, as used, mean market relations between

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the bourgeoisie and the toilers of a given nation. Can it be maintained that such relations are absent among Negroes? True, the Negro bourgeoisie is not an industrial bourgeoisie. On the contrary, it is a weak and parasitic bourgeoisie, consisting principally of "Negro intellectuals (mainly in the 'free' *professions*) and of a thin layer of small capitalists, business people." (Resolution of the C. I., October, 1930.)

But this bourgeoisie depends chiefly upon the masses of Negroes in the Jim Crow districts for its market. It also has industrial aspirations, such as the Garvey movement, Pan-African Congress, etc., revealed. On the basis of struggle for this original market, the Negro bourgeoisie has developed a peculiar nationalism—a nationalism of the ghettos. With the development of the Negro bourgeoisie, the C. I. Resolution clearly states that "there has appeared lately not only definite efforts for developing a national culture but also outspoken bourgeois tendencies toward Negro nationalism." Its culture reflects the peculiar environment of national oppression of the Negroes in the United States. For example, who would be so naive as to deny that Negro spirituals and the so-called *new* Negro literature and art are elements of this culture, reflecting the whole environment of the Negro peoples? The Negroes have their separate social institutions, churches, secret societies, clubs. The Negro bourgeoisie has, in the strata of teachers, professors, ministers, doctors, etc., its ideologists. True, this Negro culture plays the same role as all national cultures, whether of oppressed or oppressing nations, namely, that of mobilizing the masses of the particular nation under the ideological influence of their bourgeoisie. But this is quite another question.

Our theoretician, having "defeated" the C. I. and the Communist Party on the question of language, economic ties, and culture, now proceeds to "tear down" the last and most basic premise for the right of the Negroes to national liberation, *i. e.*, common territory. "The first prerequisite," he says, "for a nation is certainly a 'community of territory' . . . here they [the Communists—H. H.] appeal to the Black Belt." But not so our theoretician. He rejects the Black Belt as the basis for a Negro nation on the grounds "that only 25 per cent of the Negroes in the United States live in this Negro land." But by this rejection he not only fails to prove that the line of the Party is incorrect, but he unwittingly reveals the real counter-revolutionary face of the Lovestoneites on the Negro question. Herberg, together with the Wall Street financiers and their government, while denying the right of self-determination for the Negroes, *recognizes the right of the handful of white slave-driving*

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landowners and usurers in the Black Belt to monopolize the land in this district and subject the Negro masses to the most shameless oppression.

To any class conscious worker, the question is clear. To reject the right of the oppressed Negro majority in the Black Belt to set up their own government, means simply to accept the domination of the white slave-drivers in this territory, or in other words, to be (together with the imperialists and their allies, the slave-driving landowners) in favor of *white supremacy*. Truly, the Lovestone renegades have won their spurs as the theoretical spokesmen of white chauvinism in the labor movement. To reject the right of the Negroes to self-determination is even a step backward from bourgeois democracy, as self-determination is a bourgeois democratic right. But what is obvious to any class conscious worker becomes an impenetrable mystery to these fakers who are literally steeped in bourgeois prejudices and legalism.

Having denied the right of self-determination to the oppressed Negroes, it is quite logical that Herberg should also deny that the "Black Belt has any real economic, historical or social unity." In this connection, he deliberately twists the meaning of the C. I. Resolution on this question to imply that the "Black Belt was once a political unity, and that its political unity was deliberately destroyed by the *artificial* division into states." Of course this glaring distortion has nothing in common with the Resolution of the C. I. and merely displays the depths of rottenness and treachery to which the Lovestoneites have resorted in their efforts to discredit the line of the Party and the C. I. in the eyes of unsuspecting workers.

The C. I. Resolution points out clearly in a dialectical manner that "on the one hand the Black Belt is not in itself, either economically or politically, such a united whole as to warrant its being called a special colony of the United States. But on the other hand this zone *is not, either economically or politically, such an integral part of the whole United States as any other part of the country.*" (Emphasis mine—H. H.) Herberg should know (if he were as interested in a real revolutionary formulation of the Negro question as he is in supporting white chauvinism), that the Black Belt is identical with the old cotton belt of the South. It is precisely here that the plantation sysem and the survivals of slavery have remained most intact, and consequently, where the national question is the sharpest. Hence it is clear that the Black Belt has its own peculiar economic and historical development which distinguishes it from the rest of the country. In order to deny the

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Black Belt as a basis for a Negro nation, Herberg accepts the bourgeois administrative divisions which, in the interests of maintaining national oppression of the Negro majority in the Black Belt, divide the naturally contiguous Negro territories into artificial state and county divisions. In this manner Herberg gives direct support to the imperialists and the landowners.

In the above arguments presented by Herberg, it can be seen that he has "forgotten" one little "detail" which happens to be an implacable demand of Marxism-Leninism, *i. e.*, an historical approach. Herberg "overlooked" the first part of Stalin's definition, which reads "a nation is an historically formed community of people. . . ." This obviously means that nations, like all social phenomena, must be considered historically, *i. e.*, in the process of birth, growth, and decline. Stalin emphasizes this further in the same chaper of his brochure. He says "it is self-understood [but not by the renegade Herberg—H. H.] that a nation as well as all other social phenomena is subject to the law of change; it has its beginning and also its end." For example, there are declining nations, like the Scotch and Welsh in Great Britain. These have become almost assimilated into the stronger English nation; they have lost their prerequisites for independent national existence. Among these people, the bourgeois democratic revolution occurred long ago. On the other hand, there exist nations which are now in the process of becoming, but this process is now being retarded by imperialism, such, for example, is the case with the colonial peoples and subject nations, including the Negroes in the United States. It is obvious that the Negroes in the United States reveal among themselves all the characteristics of a nation.

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

In order to correctly understand the Marxian-Leninist approach to the national question at the present time, it is necessary to differentiate between two historical periods in the development of nationalist movements. The first period, the classic period of the formation of nations, dates roughly from 1789 (the Great French Revolution) to the year 1871 (the Franco-Prussian War), which marks the final consolidation of the German empire. The second period marks the epoch of imperialism.

The first period saw the formation of the big capitalist states of Europe and America. In our time, national movements are a thing of the past for these nations. They have become imperialist states, thriving upon the exploitation of numerous small, weaker nations which, because of the law of "unequal development of capi-

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talism" had not succeeded in developing into capitalist states by the beginning of the epoch of imperialism. Hence, struggle for national liberation on the part of these nations which have not completed their bourgeois democratic transformation, is now taking place against imperialism, which, as Lenin observed, is a "denial of democracy and all its demands, including the right of self-determination." The bourgeoisie of the great imperialist states, who in the first epoch led humanity forward in the struggle against the feudal yoke and toward cultural and political freedom, have now entered a "holy alliance" with pre-capitalist classes for the preservation of semi-slave forms of oppression of the masses in the subject nations.

In the most important colonial countries even the national bourgeoisie have no longer the significance of a revolutionary force. With the development of revolutionary mass movements, they are deserting or have already deserted, as in the cases of China, India, Egypt, etc., to the camp of imperialist counter-revolution. Stalin admirably formulates the changed status of the national question today in his polemic against Semich, in the Yugo-Slavic Commission of the Fifth Congress of the C. I.:

> "This quintessence of the national problem *now* is the struggle of the *popular mass* in the colonies and of the subjugated nationalities against finance capitalism, against political enslavement and the cultural retention of these colonies and nationalities by the imperialist bourgeoisie of the ruling nations. *Of what significance can the competitive struggle of the bourgeoisie* of the various nationalities be in this formulation of the national problem? Of course, *not of decisive importance*, and *in some cases of no importance at all.* It is quite obvious that it is chiefly a question here not as to whether the bourgeoisie of one nationality beats or can beat in the competitive struggle the bourgeoisie of another nationality, but rather that the imperialist group of the ruling nationality exploits and oppresses *the basic masses and first of all the peasants* of the colonial and subjugated nationalities, and in oppressing and exploiting them, draws them into the struggle against imperialism, making them our allies in the proletarian revolution." (Emphasis mine—H. H.)

It is precisely upon the basis of such an analysis that we must approach the Negro question in the United States. The Civil War did not complete the liberation of the Negro peoples; "it is only a Yankee bourgeois lie to say that the yoke of Negro slavery has been lifted in the United States. Formally it has been abolished, but in practice the great majority of the Negro masses in the South are living in slavery in the literal sense of the word." (C. I. Resolution.) As far as the Negro people are concerned, the task of completion of the bourgeois democratic and agrarian revolution still

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stands first on the order of the day. By leaving unsolved these basic democratic tasks, while at the same time making possible the development of class differentiation among Negroes, the Civil War created the social and economic basis for the present-day Negro national question. The Black Belt with its majority Negro population, constitutes the objective prerequisite for the realization of the struggles of the Negro masses for national liberation. The Negro toilers, once the allies of the Northern bourgeoisie but betrayed by them during the reconstruction period, have now become *the allies of the proletarian revolution.*

DENIAL OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION UNDER THE CLOAK OF FIGHTING AGAINST REACTIONARY SEPARATISM

But the demagogy of the Lovestoneites knows no bounds. Herberg contends that "as a result of its [the Communist Party's—H. H.] fundamentally false estimation of the Negro question, the new course offers the strongest objective support to reactionary-separatist tendencies among the Negro masses in the U. S. A. (Garvey movement, etc.)" (!)

How does the C. I. Resolution approach the question of separatist tendencies among Negroes? It clearly distinguishes between reactionary separatist movements and revolutionary ones, and clearly defines the attitude of the Party towards them. It includes Garveyism under the category of reactionary separatist tendencies, because Garveyism diverted the potential revolutionary movement of the Negro masses into utopian, reactionary channels of "Back to Africa." Garveyism served imperialism by drawing the Negro masses away from the struggle for their rights in the United States, and fostered separation of Negro masses from the white revolutionary workers. Thus Garveyism betrayed the liberation movement of the Negro masses. In contradistinction to the reactionary Utopia of Marcus Garvey, the C. I. and the Communist Party raise the slogan of real right of self-determination for the Negroes in the Black Belt to be achieved through a fighting alliance of Negro masses and revolutionary white workers against imperialism. The Negroes, once fooled by Garveyism, are now rallying to the leadership of the Communist Party, not on the basis of a concession by the Party to Garveyism, as the renegade Lovestoneite implies, but because they see that the Communist Party is the only force that is really fighting for national liberation. The real position of the Lovestoneites, however, is that any movement for the right of self-determination, *i. e.*, the right to separate, is reactionary. They demagogically con-

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tend that such a movement would mean separation between Negro and white workers.

Every revolutionary white worker will understand that to demand the right of self-determination, the right to separate, does not mean to advocate the separation of Negro workers from white workers. On the contrary, our aim is complete unity and fusion of Negro and white toilers. Ours is not a general cry for unity on the condition that the Negro toilers "forget" about peonage, lynching, and the system of white supremacy, as the Lovestoneites propose. But inasmuch as American imperialism retains *by force* within its state boundaries the Black Belt with its oppressed majority of Negro population, we stand for their right to separate. We demand the withdrawal of the armed forces of imperialism from the Black Belt. In other words, we understand that any lasting unity between the white and Negro toilers must be voluntary, on the basis of mutual confidence between the toilers of both races, and not upon the basis of force. We demand the right of separation, "certainly not in order to 'recommend' separation, but on the contrary in order to facilitate and accelerate the democratic rapproachment and unification of nations." (Lenin.)

Another "annihilating" argument of Herberg's against the C. I. Resolution is the contention that "so thorough-going" is the new official course on the Negro question, that it leads "of course against the will of its champions—to Jim Crowism. . . . The Communist must give support to the 'Negroes' right to their own special schools.'" "And," exclaims our theoretician, "that is exactly what the white rulers of the South want." Let us see what the exact wording of the C. I. Resolution on this question is:

> "The struggle for equal rights of the Negroes does not in any way exclude recognition and support for the Negroes' right to their own special schools, government organs, etc., *wherever the Negro masses put forward such national demands of their own accord.*" (Emphasis mine—H. H.)

But is it correct, as Herberg exclaims, that this is precisely what the white ruling class want? It is quite clear that the slave-driving plantation owners of the South do not want any kind of schools for the Negroes, special or otherwise. On the contrary, they are interested in keeping the Negro masses in cultural darkness and illiteracy as an essential condition for their continued slavery. Herberg would answer the desire of the down-trodden Negro masses for cultural enlightenment by telling them they could not get any education until such time as the white ruling classes see fit to establish mixed schools. (!!!) Thus by demagogic calls to struggle

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against the presumed Jim Crow line of the Communist Party, Herberg actually helps the white ruling classes to keep the Negroes in ignorance. Yes, Mr. Herberg, the Communist Party will support the right of the Negroes to set up their own schools, "*wherever the Negro masses put forth such national demands of their own accord.*"

Having denied the right of self-determination to the Negroes and their right to secure education, Herberg, with "biting sarcasm," profoundly remarks that "if the Negroes are given the right of self-determination in the Black Belt, why not in the contiguous wards of Harlem?" One can only shrug one's shoulders at the sheer stupidity of this "wise-crack," which reveals a profound confusion on the national question in general. One might equally wonder why the C. I. supports the right of self-determination for the Croats in Jugo-Slavia, but does not advocate the right to separate for the Croats in the Croatian quarter of Belgrade!!! It is quite clear that this slogan is a slogan for rallying the masses of toilers, and especially the farmers in the Black Belt, to the struggle against imperialism. Herberg "forgets" that at the present time the national question is essentially a peasant question.

In the south, because of the existence of the Black Belt where national oppression is the sharpest, being directly connected with semi-slave exploitation and oppression of the Negro peasantry, the path of solution of the Negro question must necessarily proceed through the struggle for their right to separate. In the North the Negro question is also a national question, having its roots, in the final analysis in the position of the Negro masses in Southern agriculture. But owing to the objective conditions of the Negro masses in the North, who are in the main workers, the main historical path of development is towards assimilation. Hence our main slogan here is "Social Equality!"

RACE, NATION, OR CLASS?

Herberg concludes his "analysis" of the Negro question and lengthy tirade against the line of the Party with the contention that the "Negro question is not a national question but a *racial and class* question." (Emphasis mine—H. H.) We have pointed out in other places the bourgeois liberal essence of the race question theory. Suffice it to remark that to contend that the Negro question in the United States is a race question in contradistinction to a national question, is to contend that the Negroes are oppressed because they are black!! The real economic and social essence of the Negro

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question consists in the difference between the economic and cultural development of Negro and white peoples in this country under a capitalist imperialist social order. The policy of national oppression of American imperialism in regard to the Negroes is expressed in efforts artificially to keep the Negroes backward, as a condition for their continued special exploitation. Therefore, the struggle of the Negro masses for liberation, for reasons enumerated above, must take the form of a movement for national liberation. Race is merely a factor in the oppression of the Negroes. The difference in color of skin and texture of hair between the two races is utilized by bourgeois theoreticians to found false racial theories for the purpose of justifying and facilitating the oppression of the Negroes.

Therefore, to maintain that the Negro question is a race question is to reduce this problem to one of its factors, to blur over its social economic essence; in other words to capitulate before bourgeois racial theories. Moreover, it is to justify a chauvinist lack of faith in the Negro masses by presenting the movement of the Negro toilers *not* as directed at the very foundations of American imperialism, but as a feeble bourgeois liberal opposition against race prejudice, or race ideology, as divorced from their economic and social roots. On the other hand, the denial of the national revolutionary character of the Negro question leads to the isolation of the revolutionary proletariat from a most important ally in the struggle against imperialism and the desertion of this ally, thus leaving it to the tender mercies of the Negro reformists and white liberals.

As to the chatter about a class question, the opportunists have always mechanically opposed class struggles to the struggles of oppressed peoples for the purpose of rejecting the latter. It is under this false slogan that the social traitors have for decades tried to cover up their denial of the peasant and national question, and their support of chauvinism. While recognizing and emphasizing the national character of the Negro question and rejecting the menshevik deception about "pure" proletarian class struggles, the Communist Party formulates the Negro question thus: The struggle of the Negroes for liberation is a phase of the class struggle of the American working class against imperialism, or in other words, as a class struggle which assumes a nationalist form.

CAN WE OPPOSE SOCIAL EQUALITY TO THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION?

Logically consistent with his chauvinistic premise, Herberg raises the slogan of social equality as opposed to the right of self-determi-

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nation. Can we oppose social equality to the right of self-determination? A concrete historical analysis conclusively shows that social equality without a consistent struggle for the right of self-determination for the Negroes in the Black Belt is but a lying liberal phrase. The Negro toilers themselves in this district will justifiably regard it as such. The Negro farmer for ages has suffered under the most brutal oppressive yoke; his attitude is one of rancour and distrust towards the white people as a whole, regarding them as the incarnation of his misery; he sees even the white worker misguided, participating in lynch mobs and terror against the Negro. Is it conceivable, then, that this Negro farmer will believe in any promises of social equality? He will want to know, and justly, who is going to protect his equality from the lynch mobs and the organized terror of the white slave-drivers. The Lovestoneites would undoubtedly say that this proves the reactionary nature of the Negro farmer, who "won't believe a white man's word."

But the white revolutionary workers, who understand the powerful revolutionary potentialities inherent in the struggles of the Negro masses, would answer in the following manner: "This land on which you and your ancestors have slaved for centuries rightfully belongs to you. The bosses' government in this territory is a government of foreign slave-drivers; it is our enemy as well as yours. We recognize and support your right to organize your own government, to elect your officials, to organize your own militia, and your unqualified right to separate from the United States. Moreover, we, the white revolutionary workers, will prove our sincerity right now, at the present time, by actively supporting and helping to organize a struggle to bring about those conditions in which you will be able to exercise your right to self-determination." On the other hand, the class conscious Negro workers will say: "The class conscious white workers are your friends. Their enemies are the same as yours, the white bosses and landlords, and their agents, the A. F. of L. and Socialist fakers. The Negro misleaders of the type of Garvey and others are actually betraying you and are concluding reactionary agreements with the white slave-drivers behind your backs. Your only road to freedom and possession of the land you till, lies through a fighting alliance with the revolutionary white and Negro workers against imperialism and for the right of self-determination."

UNITED FRONT OF WHITE CHAUVINISTS

In conclusion, an analysis of class relations at the present time will reveal the following line-up in opposition to the right of the

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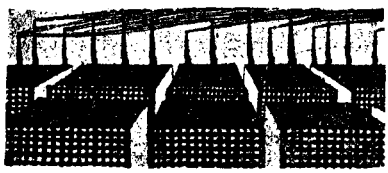
Negroes to self-determination: The southern landlords and usurers backed by Wall Street finance capitalism and the United States government; their agents, the Klu Klux Klan, Black Shirts, etc., who are engaged in organizing lynching parties and mob violence against Negroes all over the country; Southern politicians who at the present time are raising the bogey of black domination more strenuously than ever before; the Fish Committee which contends that the Communist Party is attempting to stir up a revolt among the Negroes in the South; Norman Thomas, the "Socialist," who demagogically contends that the slogan of self-determination is an attempt to Jim-Crow the Negroes, while he characteristically remains silent in regard to the Jim-Crow locals of the Socialist Party in the South; and finally, the Lovestone renegades. No major reactionary force is missing from this line-up.

Thus the united front of chauvinism against the revolutionary program of the Communist Party is complete.



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The Growing Political Crisis in Poland

By EDWARD LENO

POLAND was drawn into the economic world crisis before any other country. In the chain of capitalist "stabilization," Poland is one of the weakest links. This is why we find in Poland a great economic-political shakeup, a deepening crisis of ruling fascism, and the maturing of a revolutionary situation.

Poland is a country with a considerably developed industry. While the technique is comparatively low as measured by the standards of the leading capitalist countries, the concentration and centralization of capital has made great headway, finance capital plays an outstanding role, and capitalist exploitation is particularly rapacious. At the same time Poland is an agrarian-industrial country. Three-fifths of the population draw their living from agriculture. In spite of the amanlgamation of the nobility with the city bourgeoisie and of the essentially capitalist relations in the village, there still remain considerable remnants of feudalism, especially in Western Ukraine and Western White Russia.

Foreign capital plays a large role in the economy of Poland, especially in heavy industry, mining, and banking. It would be entirely erroneous, however, to draw the conclusion that Poland is a colony of foreign capital, that Poland is nothing but a vassalate of foreign imperialism, French or other. It is true that foreign capital exercises an influence over Polish imperialism, that Polish imperialism is financially and politically dependent upon the outstanding great powers of the capitalist world. The roots of Polish imperialism, however, are to be found in the *home* economic structure of Poland itself.

The bourgeoisie of Poland, and its state, are imperialists due to their own home interests, due to the pressure for expansion. The role of "barbed wire" (Clemenceau's expression) against the "Bolshevist flood," the role of an outpost of the great imperialist powers in their war and intervention preparations against the Soviet Union, correspond, in the first place, to the direct imperialist interests of the Polish bourgeoisie itself. Fear of a Bolshevik revolution in Poland, the desire to recover the confiscated landed estates and factories in Soviet Ukraine and Soviet White Russia, the desire

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to regain the vast Soviet markets—all this drives the Polish bourgeoisie to participate in all counter-revolutionary undertakings against the Soviet Union. This policy of the Polish bourgeoisie follows the line of the anti-Soviet imperialist policy of the world bourgeoisie, in which the Soviet Union, the citadel of the world revolution, rankles like a thorn.

The imperialist policy of the Polish bourgeois state, of its fascist dictatorship, which is supported by world imperialism, the struggle against the fascist dictatorship and its war preparations against the Soviet Union, are therefore of tremendous importance for the world proletariat, including the American workers.

II

The economic crisis in Poland, an organic part of the world crisis, has become especially acute in consequence of a number of causes flowing from the economic and political structure of fascist Poland. The extreme pauperization of the village masses, the remnants of feudalism, rural unemployment and heavy rural taxes, the use of forced labor for the construction of strategic roads, as well as the weaker competitive power of Polish industry which is being sapped by foreign loans and credits, all this has had its influence upon deepening the economic crisis. The growing military burdens, the expenses for building up the fascist apparatus of dictatorship, also played an important part.

The following figures, far from being exhaustive, may illustrate the catastrophic economic situation of fascist Poland. The average monthly production of coal for the first 10 months of 1930, compared with the corresponding period of 1929, fell 19.6 per cent. This means, in absolute figures, a drop from 3,819,000 tons to 3,064,000 tons. The average monthly production of oil for the same period decreased 2.7 per cent, pig iron 32.2 per cent, steel 11.4 per cent. The average monthly production for 1930 as compared with 1913 was: pig iron 46.2 per cent; coal 90.4; oil 59.2; steel 78.1 per cent. The situation of the light industries, textile, metal, wood, artificial fertilizer, is no better. For the first 10 months of 1930 the monthly average number of hours worked was 18,832,000, compared with 23,226,000 hours for the corresponding period in 1929.

Especially low is the index of production of means of production. The lowest is the index of means of production serving the railroads, which dropped from 77 to 66 in one month, November to December, 1930.

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In light industry, the greatest decrease in production is to be found in textiles, which showed a sharp decrease around Christmas. The drop in textiles and in railroad transportation is the largest of all—from 82 in November to 62 in December. The only industry working overtime is *the war industry*.

The industrial crisis is intricately linked up with the agricultural crisis, so that each aggravates the other. The agricultural crisis is unusually acute. It expresses itself, in the first place, in a big drop in the prices of agricultural products. The average price of wheat in 1930 as compared with 1928 fell 35 per cent, of rye 60 per cent, of oats 55 per cent.

Unemployment reached record figures in 1930. According to official data the number of unemployed in December, 1930, was 246,900, compared with 68,427 in December, 1929. At the same time partial unemployment also increased, totaling, in 1930, 19.8 per cent of the number of engaged workers, as compared with 14.3 per cent in 1929. We must not forget that the total number of workers engaged in the large-scale industry of Poland is 700,000 to 850,000. Unemployment is growing every day. In January, 1931, the number of officially registered unemployed rose to 303,000. That the actual number of unemployed is much larger than is admitted by official figures has been pointed out even by the Polish bourgeois press. Many workers, realizing that there is no way of obtaining state unemployment relief, do not register. According to incomplete reports of the labor unions (with Christian, "national," and social-fascist leadership), the number of unemployed in the cities alone has reached one-half million. This does not count the hundreds of thousands of rural unemployed who are not registered at all as they are excluded from state relief, and whose sufferings are particularly grave due to the fact that the migration into the cities has nearly stopped while the world crisis and the restriction of immigration have greatly decreased the emigration to other countries for seasonal work. Against the background of general pauperization of the village, rural unemployment is truly terrific. Taking only large scale industry, we find at least 25 per cent to 30 per cent unemployed. Adding the partially unemployed, we find that 60 per cent of the entire working population are suffering from unemployment. Never have so many workers suffered actual hunger in Poland as at present.

In consequence of the colossal growth of unemployment and the pauperization of very broad strata of the working population, the purchasing power in the internal market has greatly decreased. According to estimates of the bourgeois press it has fallen 30 per cent.

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Polish exports and imports have also considerably decreased during 1930. For the first 11 months of 1930 exports were 2,250,100,000 *zloty* (there are 8.80 zloty to a dollar), as compared with 2,658,-600,000 zloty in 1929. The import figures are 2,087,100,000 zloty for 1930 and 2,898,200,000 for 1929. The import of machines and instruments has dropped 40 per cent, which indicates the general collapse of industry.

The crisis has also brought about a curtailment of the gold and specie funds of the Polish State Bank. The rapid withdrawal of foreign securities from Poland has been going on for a long while. For the last few months, however, it has assumed a much more serious character. Not only foreign capital is running away from Poland. The financial reserves of the state itself are rapidly dwindling. For the first eight months of 1930 the so-called "armored" funds of the state—a reserve which is considered "untouchable"—was decreased 75 per cent. That the situation of the money market is becoming worse is evident from the financial report of the Polish State Bank for the second 10 days of January, 1931. From this report it is clear that the export of gold and foreign specie for the first 20 days of January amounted to 25,000,000 zloty, over 1,000,-000 daily.

There are no prospects for improvement. On the contrary, everything points to a further sharpening of the crisis. The Polish bourgeoisie looks toward the future with great anxiety. "There are no symptoms indicating the possibility of an improvement in the economic situation," says the Institute for Economic Research, forecasting a "depression to last very long."

Thus it is evident that the process of decay of capitalist stabilization in Poland proceeds with seven-league boots. Sentiments of depression and hopelessness are expressed by the Polish bourgeoisie with increasing frequency. The economic crisis is rapidly—very rapidly—transforming itself into a general political crisis.

III

The sharper the economic crisis the more ruthless and brutal become the attacks of capital on the broad masses of the working class and the exploited peasantry. Even the fascist "Committee of Inquiry into the Situation of the Workers" could not conceal the predatory character of capitalist rationalization in Poland. According to the reports of that committee, 75 per cent of the Polish workers earn a wage which is below the starvation minimum worked out by that fascist committee. "The real wages of the Polish workers," says

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the report, "amount to one-third of the minimum and one-quarter of the maximum earnings of the German workers." The "legally" established eight-hour day has practically been abolished in all the important branches of industry. The remnants of social insurance are also being destroyed. The fascist government is curtailing the unemployment insurance fund, while depriving the partially unemployed of any relief whatever. It decreases the taxes of the capitalist landlords, while increasing the tax burdens of the toiling masses. A policy of strengthening the wealthy farmers at the expense of the poorer peasants is being pursued in the villages, the poorer peasants being deprived of their pastures and transferred to worse plots of land. Long-term credits are granted only to the noble landlords and the wealthy farmers (kulaks). As a result, the broad masses of the peasants sink into debt and the pauperization of the village has reached tremendous proportions. The process of differentiation in the village is being sharpened. The cleavage between the upper stratum of the wealthy peasants, and the mass of middle peasants who are more and more being ruined, is on the increase, while the poverty of the broad masses of the village poor becomes ever less tolerable.

If we add the brutal national policy of oppression and extermination practised in Western Ukraine, Western White Russia, and Upper Silesia, and in relation to the so-called national minorities, such as Jews and Germans in ethnographic Poland, we have a picture of the basic factors making for a revolutionary upswing in Poland. The development of this upswing, despite irregularity, proceeds along the line of a united struggle of the workers and peasants against fascist dictatorship. A mere reading of the newspaper accounts is sufficient to prove that there is a tremendous sharpening of the struggle in both city and village. Nearly every demonstration and every strike is transformed into a bloody battle with the police. The same holds true of the numerous protests of the peasants against taxes, against the fascist division of the land. The mighty peasant revolt in Western Ukraine where, according to the information of Pilsudski's Minister of Internal Affairs, Savoy-Skladowski, there were burned over 170 estates of landlords and "osadniki" (former Polish military men who had been placed on the land of Ukrainian peasants) and over 20 government institutions, bears witness to the deep upheaval of the peasant masses.

The revolutionary movement is beginning to break the bonds of fascist terror, which in atrocity and savagery reaches the limit. During the "pacification" of Western Ukraine over 800 villages were burned and destroyed by the savage hordes of Pilsudski's "punitive expeditions," thousands were flogged, maimed, and imprisoned,

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women were violated, and heavy contributions were levied. A policy of physical extermination of political prisoners was also entered upon, as exemplified by Luck, Lodz, Lwow, and Chelm.

Mass raids on revolutionary workers, sadist tortures in "defense," (secret police) chambers and in prisons, the wounding and outright killing of strikers by the police and the fascist and social-fascist bands, cannot stop the growth of the fighting activities of the masses.

Right now, after the "pacification" of Western Ukraine, after the events in Luck, after the terror elections to the Sejm and the Senate, not a week passes but the workers take action in mass demonstrations of unemployed as well as employed workers and peasants against the bloody fascist dictatorship. The working woman is being drawn into the struggles and into the street battles with the police. There are clear sympoms of a growing revolutionary sentiment among the soldiers. In some instances soldiers have actually placed themselves on the side of workers' demonstrations and against the police, as in Zawiercze, Pabianice, and Minsk-Mazowieck. Ever broader masses are beginning to move and are being mobilized by the Communist vanguard.

The fact that, despite the most ruthless terror, the masses succeeded at the last Sejm elections in electing five representatives of the revolutionary anti-fascist bloc proves that fascism has not succeeded either in frightening or in demoralizing the basic cadres of the working class that are following the Communist Party. That this is the case is proved by the fact that the Communists elected deputies in Warsaw and in the Dombrowo coal region, whereas the social-fascists did not succeed in electing their candidates. Lodz, the Manchester of Poland, the greatest textile center of the country, sent two Communist deputies to the Sejm, while the P. P. S. (Polish Socialist Party) which formerly had three deputies from Lodz, this time elected none.

The revolutionary upsurge on the basis of a deep economic crisis sharpens the internal frictions in the fascist camp itself. This is expressed in the nominal "struggle" between Pilsudski's "Sanation," the National-Democratic Party, and the so-called "Centro-lew" (a bloc of the P. P. S. with the groupings of populist-fascist wealthy farmers). On the surface this "struggle" assumes very sharp forms, like the arrests of social-fascist deputies opposed to Pilsudski (Brest) who were brutally treated—flogged, beaten, and degraded according to the best sadist methods of Pilsudski and Mussolini. Fundamentally, however, these groupings represent so many branches of fascism. The "struggle" is conducted over the methods and means of fighting the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the Communist Party of Poland. The

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shameful demeanor of the flogged and humiliated deputies, their frantic efforts to prove that they are by no means revolutionists, their care for the "good name" of fascist Poland abroad, the lackey-like crawling before Pilsudski's government for the purpose of inducing it to grant sham concessions in order to maintain an appearance of democratic forms, the active struggle against the revolutionary workers and the full support given to the war preparations against the Soviet Union—all this proves that we deal here with different members of the same fascist organism.

All quarrels and disagreements in the fascist camp, notwithstanding their apparent sharpness, remain within the bounds of principally the same class basis. Their political aim is to strengthen the fascist dictatorship under cover of parliamentary appearances and with the adequate participation of "his majesty Pilsudski's opposition" in directing the fascist state. Still, the very fact that the fascists in Poland have begun to arrest one another and to flog one another's naked bodies is proof that there is no peace in the fascist camp.

The only anti-fascist power in Poland is the Communist Party, which is conducting a heroic and self-sacrificing struggle for a revolutionary outcome of the crisis.

While all branches of fascism—Pilsudski's "Sanation," the National-Democrats, the "Centro-lew," and the social-fascists, as well as the various bands of national fascism—are seeking a way out of the crisis in a war against the Soviet Union for which they are preparing feverishly, and in a drowning of the struggle of the workers and peasants in rivers of blood, the Communist Party of Poland is mobilizing the broadest masses for the struggle against fascist dictatorship, for a Soviet Poland, for a revolutionary defense of the Soviet Union, and for a transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war.

Addressing the last convention of the Communist Party of Poland, the Central Committee of the CP USSR said:

> "The Communist Party of Poland is one of the best sections of the Comintern and it finds itself in one of the most responsible fighting positions of the international revolutionary movement."

It is the duty of every class-conscious worker and of every friend of the Soviet Union and enemy of fascism to support the heroic Communist Party of Poland in its revolutionary struggle for a Soviet government.

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Our Present Tasks in Cuba

By O. RODRIGUEZ

Comments on the Directives of the Caribbean Buro of the CI to the CC of the Communist Party of Cuba

THE Caribbean Buro of the CI has formulated a series of practical directives to the CC of the CP of Cuba suggesting concrete measures for the carrying out of the Party's immediate tasks. The directives confine themselves to the following propositions:

1. Mobilization of the masses for the immediate concrete struggles from the angle of the demands outlined for the Program of Action;
2. Organization of the unemployed, discussing the forms of organization and the nature of the activities of the organizations of the unemployed;
3. Immediate tasks of the Party's trade union work;
4. Strengthening the Party organization.

The following constitutes an elaboration and explanation of these directives.

* * * * *

The revolutionary struggle in Cuba at the present time is of such great importance as to deserve the utmost attention and active support of the world revolutionary movement, especially of the revolutionary movement on the American continent.

Cuba is, in fact, one of the most important colonies of Yankee imperialism. It is held in economic bondage by one of the greatest combinations of Yankee finance capital centering in the National City Bank. To maintain this regime of imperialist exploitation, the United States government is keeping in power the fascist band of Machado which stops at nothing to suppress the revolutionary movement of the masses, especially the revolutionary movements of the workers led by the Communist Party of Cuba.

The Cuban working class, led by the Communist Party, occupies at present the front trenches of struggle against Yankee imperialism.

PRESENT CRISIS AND THE WAY OUT

The misery and suffering of the Cuban masses at the present time is especially acute because the world economic crisis, precipitated by the collapse of United States "prosperity" in 1929, found Cuba in the throes of a deep depression lasting since 1924. The price of

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sugar, which is the principal product of Cuba, had declined from 23 cents a pound 10 years ago to about 1 cent a pound in 1930.

The decline in the price of sugar continuing since 1924 had resulted in an even faster decline of the standard of living of the workers and of the peasantry. The daily wage of a full-fledged cane-field laborer is about 40 cents. With this pittance the workers have to buy their food (rice, potatoes, beans) *imported from abroad*, at high prices controlled by monopolistic export houses.

Wages are continually being cut. Unemployment keeps on increasing. Today there are in Cuba about 600,000 unemployed out of a total population of less than 4,000,000.

Yankee imperialism, in order to maintain Cuba as a supplier of raw material, has confined Cuban economy within the bounds of one industry—the cultivation of cane sugar, the refining being concentrated in the United States. The growth of other industries—let alone the free economic development of the island—has been retarded and effectively checked. The collapse of the sugar market since 1924, topped by the present world economic crisis, has produced a catastrophic condition on the island.

Now Yankee imperialism and that section of the Cuban bourgeoisie which supports its rule are looking for a way out of the blind alley in which Cuba finds itself. On the economic field these searchings for a way out of the crisis proceed mainly along two lines: First, the rationalization of the sugar industry, with special emphasis upon cheapening the cost of production (reducing wages) and limitation of output as part of a world scheme to raise and stabilize the price of sugar, which is embodied in the so-called Chadbourne plan. Second, the diversification of Cuba's agriculture with a view of raising a number of foodstuffs formerly obtained from abroad. This plan has been presented to the world as a "radical" change in Cuba's economic structure directed towards the building of "a national prosperity along the same lines which have proved so successful in the United States." ("Cuban Readjustment to Current Economic Forces," *Trade Information Bulletin No.* 725, United States Department of Commerce.)

On the political field, the efforts of Yankee imperialism and its supporters are directed towards a consolidation of the bourgeois forces around the above-outlined economic program and around a concentrated attack upon the revolutionary movements of the masses, in the first instance upon the working class, the revolutionary unions and the Communist Party, with the methods of fascist terror.

Machado's manifesto of January, 1931, gives an outline of this policy. The manifesto singles out the Communists as the greatest

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"menace," holding out the olive branch of peace to those who wish to collaborate with the present regime. It says:

> "An impartial observer can clearly see that the Communists are working under strict instructions of the Fifth Congress (of the R.I.L.U.) which took place in Moscow. Through small strikes, through public demonstrations, through the bringing about of constant unrest they are trying to destroy the stability of the government. . . . They picked out Cuba because this republic, due to its position on the continent and due to its nearness and historical relations to the United States of North America, is very important for them."

The fascist terror against the revolutionary movement is in full swing. At the same time the efforts to conciliate certain elements of the opposition, in order to bring about a consolidation of all bourgeois forces against the revolutionary ferment among the masses, are continuing under the guidance and pressure of Yankee imperialism and its ambassador in Cuba, Guggenheim.

The April 2 statement of Machado, issued through his Secretary of the Interior, Vivancos, says:

> "The administration of President Machado is more anxious, perhaps, than any other group of officials or individuals in Cuba to bring a happy conclusion to the political dissensions which for some time have threatened the stability of the republic, and I can say on behalf of the government that the administration is willing to restore constitutional rights throughout the island and recommend to Congress the enactment of a liberal amnesty law for all political prisoners confined in prisons at the present time."

Machado assumes in this statement the face of a lamb and the voice of an angel. But he does not fail to point out that in exchange for the blessings of constitutional rights which he is willing to restore to the bourgeoisie he demands the "immediate cessation of violent acts, systematic disturbance of public order and peace, and all other anti-government demonstrations."

In other words, for a few crumbs of concessions to the upper strata of the bourgeois opposition Machado demands the cessation of all struggles against his regime and the rule of Yankee imperialism in Cuba. He demands complete support for his fascist terror against the toiling masses and their revolutionary organizations. Ambassador Guggenheim is guiding and facilitating the carrying out of this policy by flirting with certain sections of the opposition while rendering all possible support to the Machado regime. This is very well shown in his latest statement which says: "It is true that I would welcome a cessation of the difficulties that are embroiling Cuba, but it is not for me to interfere. I am friendly with leaders of both government and the opposition, but I have consistently urged

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that the only possible satisfactory solution to the present internal problem of Cuba is a strictly Cuban solution."

The leaders of the nationalists, Mendieta and others, are participating in the negotiations for this bourgeois-imperialist peace. They do not present any demands for the improvement of the conditions of the workers and peasants. The nationalist leaders stand ready, for a few political concessions to the bourgeoisie, further to surrender Cuba and its toiling masses to the rule of Yankee imperialism and its native tools.

While this bargaining is in process, tending toward a consolidation of the bourgeois forces and intensification of the fascist terror against the masses, the student youth, who constitute the shock troops of the nationalist movement, are engaging in sporadic acts of individual terror, isolated from the mass movements of the workers and peasants, without a consistent revolutionary program and aims. In this way the revolutionary student youth is merely becoming a plaything in the hands of the bourgeois opposition which is looking towards conciliation with the present regime and collaboration with Yankee imperialism against the masses.

The "peace" between Machado and the bourgeois opposition of Menocal and the rest, which is being realized under Guggenheim's pressure and leadership, will constitute a victory for Yankee imperialism. It demonstrates once more the utter helplessness and inability of the nationalists to wage or lead an effective struggle against Yankee imperialism and its Cuban bourgeois supporters.

This "peace" is the imperialist-bourgeois way out of the present crisis in Cuba. It is a peace of hunger and fascist terror for the masses. It is a peace for the further enslavement of Cuba by Yankee imperialism.

The Chadbourne plan, which is a part of the peace, is resulting in increased unemployment, lower wages, intensified speed-up on the sugar plantations under the terror of government troops and military guards, and ruination of the small farmers who are badly hit by the limitation of sugar crops.

The policy of financial retrenchment, also part of the Machado-Guggenheim-Menocal peace, is resulting in wage reductions of the lower-grade government employees and no appropriations for the relief of the starving masses, while the expenditures for the upkeep of the army and the Machado fascist bands are increasing.

The present taxation policy—the emergency law—part of the same peace of hunger and fascist terror, which is also represented as a means of "encouraging the growth of native industry"—imposes a crushing burden upon the workers, peasants, and the poor population of the cities. At the same time the application of the

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emergency law facilitates the export of "native" capital for investment abroad and enables Yankee imperialism to get still more of a stronghold upon the resources and economy of Cuba.

And last, but not least, is the consolidation of the bourgeoisie for a ruthless campaign of fascist terror against the toiling masses and the national-liberation movement of Cuba. This is the chief aim of the bourgeois imperialist peace pact prompted by the catastrophic economic conditions on the island and the imminence of a revolutionary upsurge of the toiling masses.

STRUGGLE OF THE MASSES AND LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

It is under these conditions that the Communist Party of Cuba is attempting to fulfil its role as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class which is destined to head the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution in Cuba. These efforts of our Party are still being seriously hampered by strong remnants of petty-bourgeois reformism and radicalism as well as by serious weaknesses of the Party organization.

The turn initiated in the Party's work about November, 1930, following the letter of the CP USA to the CP of C has already produced good tangible results. What is necessary is a more conscious understanding of the full meaning of this turn, and a more decisive application of the new methods of work and organization.

As to the general orientation of the Party: There seems to be a tendency in the Party to proceed from the point of view that since the working class and the Party are not yet ready for the seizure of power there is little else that the Party can do to mobilize the masses for struggle.

The result of such a non-Bolshevik point of view is that the Party fails to speak to the masses about their immediate revolutionary tasks. The Party does not show the masses the *revolutionary way out* of the present crisis. Consequently, the Party cannot effectively organize and lead the *daily struggles* of the masses, through which alone the masses will arrive at the task of seizing power under the leadership of the Communist Party.

What is the Party's policy to mobilize the masses against the growing wave of fascist terror? Merely to denounce it is insufficient, just as it is insufficient merely to proclaim the slogan of a Workers' and Peasants' Government. The masses are suffering from concrete attacks. Their revolutionary organizations are broken up. Their meetings are dispersed, and the participants jailed, wounded, and killed. Their leaders are imprisoned and assassinated. Their

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press is outlawed. They are compelled to work on the sugar plantations under the lash of troops and rural guards.

Will the masses fight against these attacks? Certainly. The Cuban Party has already led splendid mass struggles of this character, as in March, 1930. That was a general strike. But general strikes cannot be had every day, whereas the masses are compelled to fight against these fascist attacks almost daily.

The Party has not yet developed the method of organizing the widest masses of workers and peasants for a day-to-day struggle against the fascist terror of the Machado regime. The Party has not even formulated a clear program of partial demands against this terror, such as the right to organize, strike and picket; the freedom of press and assembly; unconditional liberation of all political prisoners; and withdrawal of all troops and military guards from the sugar plantations.

Especially was it important for the Party to place itself at the head of a mass movement for such partial demands when Machado promulgated his emergency decrees initiating the latest phase of the terror regime. By doing so the Party would have demonstrated in practice its leading role in the revolutionary struggle and the hegemony of the proletariat. Failure to do so has resulted in the bourgeois "opposition" being able to parade as the opponents of Machado's terror, deceiving and demoralizing the masses in preparation for peace with Machado against the masses. Failure by the Party to assume the initiative and mass leadership in the campaign against the Machado terror has also resulted in the nationalists appearing as the only force combatting Machado, whereas in reality they were merely a plaything—whether willingly or unwillingly—of the bourgeois opposition, without seriously damaging either the Machado regime or the rule of Yankee imperialism. On the other hand, with the Party and the working class at the head of the struggle against the Machado terror, the revolutionary nationalist youth and the poor population of the cities must and can be won over to the side of the revolutionary mass movement on a wide anti-imperialist united front.

Similarly on the question of the emergency law and the Chadbourne plan. The Party was hesitating as to whether or not it should initiate a fight against the law. Why? Is not this law part of the so-called stabilization scheme of the bourgeois imperialist peace compact which is now being consummated? Is it not directed chiefly against the workers and peasants, while also striking against the city poor and even against some sections of the merchants? Nevertheless the Party did not develop a campaign against the law, confin-

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ing itself—after some hesitation—to several meetings of protest against it. Just because this emergency law affected the overwhelming majority of the Cuban population, with the exception of the bourgeois top, this was no reason for hesitating to initiate a fight against it. On the contrary. This was a basic reason for the Communist Party and the working class to put themselves *at the head* of a real people's movement against Yankee imperialism and the Machado regime.

The same applies to the position of the Party on the Chadbourne plan. As was shown above, this plan aims to "stabilize" the sugar industry by rationalization of production and hence more unemployment, wage cutting, speed-up under military supervision, ruination of the small peasants. This plan, together with the emergency law and the intensified fascist terror against the masses and their revolutionary organizations, is the bourgeois-imperialist attempt to solve the crisis in Cuba. Hence, the Party should have challenged the Chadbourne plan by initiating a campaign for mass struggle against it *as part of a general campaign* against the bourgeois-imperialist way out of the crisis which is being incorporated in the Machado-Guggenheim-Menocal peace compact.

The Party must work out a Program of Action for the present phase of the Cuban revolution, showing the masses the revolutionary way out of the crisis and the next steps in the struggle. On this Program of Action, as against the bourgeois-imperialist peace program of hunger and fascist terror, the Party must strive to mobilize the masses of workers and peasants for everyday struggle, aiming to win for this struggle the revolutionary nationalist youth and the poor population of the cities. Thus will be created the true united front in the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution headed by the working class and led by the Communist Party.

This Program of Action must be a program of concrete demands, answering the burning needs of the masses in the present crisis. We have already indicated the nature of the partial demands to be directed against the fascist terror. These demands must be connected with such demands as immediate unemployment relief, the eight-hour day, a minimum wage, cancellation of all peasant indebtedness, abolition of all indirect taxation and all taxation upon the peasantry, social insurance against unemployment, old age, sickness, and the like. Only by means of such a program of demands will the Party be able to mobilize the masses for revolutionary struggle against the fascist terror, the Chadbourne plan, the emergency law; against unemployment, wage cuts, and speed-up; against the whole peace compact of Machado-Guggenheim-Menocal. Only with such a program of demands, linked up in our agitation with

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the basic slogans of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution—such as complete national independence of Cuba, confiscation of all large estates and distribution of the land to the peasants, confiscation and nationalization of all imperialist enterprises, a Workers' and Peasants' Government—will the Party be able to raise the movement to the level of revolutionary struggle for power.

In developing the campaign around such a Program of Action, the Party will also be able to make a successful appeal to the revolutionary nationalists to join the common struggle which is to be headed by the working class. The experience of the last six months amply demonstrates the correctness of our contention that the refusal of the nationalists to support the revolutionary struggles of the masses, and the policy of isolated, sporadic acts of individual terror by the nationalist youth, are only helping the bourgeois "opposition" to secure for themselves better terms of peace with Machado and Yankee imperialism *at the expense* of the toiling masses and the cause of the national independence of Cuba. This lesson must be driven home to the masses generally, and especially to the revolutionary nationalist youth and to the poor population of the cities that is following the nationalists. These elements must be shown that only by joining with the revolutionary movement of the masses, in a revolutionary anti-imperialist united front, can they bring about the national liberation of Cuba. And the most effective way to win these elements for such a united front is for the Party to mobilize the workers and peasants on a Program of Action against the Machado-Guggenheim-Menocal peace pact. In the struggle for this program the working class will demonstrate to the revolutionary nationalists that it—the working class—is destined to head the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution, and the Communist Party will prove that it alone—as the Party of the working class—is able to lead it.

In order to be able to unfold these activities among the masses, the Party must continue to wage a determined and systematic struggle against all tendencies towards sectarianism (either seizure of power or nothing), opportunism (united fronts from on top with yellow trade union leaders, dragging the Party at the tail end of the nationalists), putchism and conspiratorial romanticism, and remnants of anarchist ideology in relation to Party discipline. All these tendencies are the result of the pressure of petty bourgeois ideology upon the masses and upon the Party. Whether this ideology takes the form of frank reformism, or of radicalism, its effect is the same. It hampers the growth of the Party as the political party of the Cuban proletariat, it retards the development of class consciousness of the workers, it stands in the way of establishing the hegemony

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of the proletariat in the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution, it undermines the building of the Party as a disciplined Bolshevik Party. A systematic struggle against all such tendencies is a basic part of the development of the Party's mass activities.

The Party must also radically improve its composition and organizational structure. This question deserves special treatment by itself. Here it is essential to point out the following:

While the Party membership is growing (500 members at present as compared with about 300 a year ago), the *composition* of the membership continues to suffer in three essential respects: (1) A very low percentage of workers from the basic industries on the island, such as sugar plantations and mills, and marine transport; (2) similarly a low percentage of native-born Cubans; (3) very few Negro workers, though one-third of the population is Negro. These defects are especially strong in the Havana organization.

From the point of view of Party structure the following are the basic weaknesses: (1) There are no factory nuclei; (2) along with street nuclei, there exist what are called trade union nuclei which are identical with the Party fractions; (3) absence of a Party press.

It is obvious that these weaknesses in the composition of the Party membership and in the organizational structure reflect the weaknesses of the Party's work among the masses. Because the Party carries on little, if any, activity on the sugar plantations, in the sugar mills, among the transport workers, the Party has a very small membership among the workers of these industries. Similarly, because the Party does little among the Negro workers, there are practically no Negroes in the Party. And because the Party is not orientated towards the basic sections of the Cuban proletariat, which is employed on the plantations and in mills, the Party has no plantation nuclei, or mill nuclei. These organizational defects, in their turn, hamper the development of the Party's work among the basic masses of the working class.

A radical reorientation of the Party towards the basic sections of the Cuban proletariat, and a corresponding rebuilding of the Party organization on the basis of shop and plantation nuclei, is indispensable for the successful mobilization of the mass struggles for the Program of Action. The Party must also find the means of establishing a Party organ, even if it be only a small bulletin. This is absolutely essential for the further growth of the Party.

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Demagogy and Unemployment Insurance in the United States

By SAM DARCY

IN Marx's preface to the first edition of *Capital*, he says:

> "The English Established Church will more readily pardon an attack on 38 of its 39 articles than on 1-39 of its income."

Marx might just as well have spoken of any oppressor class—of ours, for example, and of the savagery with which it met our demands for social insurance during the past 18 months. The theoreticians of the bourgeoisie (not without a degree of support from the economics of Lovestone and Scott Nearing) had sung the lullaby of permanent prosperity to the too-willing ears of the middle class, the captains of industry, and the rentiers. The first aggressive demands for social insurance by the workers which reached the bourgeoisie in this "prosperity" mood brought a shrieking "No" from the masters who believed (or, better, wanted to believe) that the crisis was, in the words of the Great Engineer himself, only a temporary "maladjustment." The thick-skulled parrots who repeated the phrases of Lovestone's theses have not learnt anything. But the writers of *Recent Economic Changes* have been *somewhat* affected by events since the dramatic stock market crash. Amongst other things the bourgeoisie is re-examining its tactics against our fight for social insurance, with a view to leading the masses away from this militant struggle. Precisely with the view of protecting its income it is formulating a more clever, more deceiving program, which may even call for the establishment of an alleged social insurance law in order to defeat the movement for real social insurance generated by our Party.

It is important that we examine the discussion on this question going on in the camp of our enemy, so that we may understand their next moves and know how to fight them more effectively.

PREPARING THE CAMPAIGN OF DEMAGOGY

At this moment dozens of capitalist agencies are investigating the question of social insurance, chiefly in regards to unemploy-

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ment, and preparing reports for the next Congress. Just to mention a few of the outstanding investigators:

> The A. F. of L. Executive Council is preparing a report to be discussed at the Council meeting in Washington, May 5.
>
> Hoover's Emergency Committee headed by Policeman Woods is investigating all plans and will soon publish its proposals.
>
> Senators Wagner, Glenn, and Herbert are a committee to hold hearings in New York and Chicago and report not later than December 7.
>
> The Chamber of Commerce of the United States has a sub-committee formulating a program.
>
> Several states (New York, Connecticut, and others), have special committees working out proposals.
>
> Hearings have already been held on proposed bills (California, for example), and the legislatures are now marking time waiting for a "steer" from the federal government.
>
> The recent conference of self-styled progressives chose a committee headed by a Mr. Lubin to work out proposals which will presumably be presented to the next Congress.

But these capitalist agencies are not merely discussing. Already one group is campaigning against another to gain support for its particular plan of defeating the workers' struggle for social insurance. Thus President Hoover has appointed J. R. Alpine, once president of the A. F. of L. plumbers' union, and runner-up candidate to Doak in the Department of Labor, to "reconcile organized labor to the administration's substitute employment service plan, instead of the Wagner plan it urgently supported," in the words of the Scripps-Howard news service.

The change in their method of fighting our social insurance demands is most clearly expressed in the *Wall Street Journal.* One year ago this leading voice of finance capital shouted "No" with the rest. It denounced social insurance proposals as visionary schemes conceived by Moscow to increase taxes on the poor starving stockholders; this year (March 13, 1931, issue, Pacific Coast Edition) it makes what superficially at least seems like a complete about-face. Under the heading "Job Insurance to Face Nation," a front page article all but declares for social insurance, at least in name. It says:

> "There appears insufficient realization in quarters which should be most interested, *of the progress which proposals for unemployment insurance have made in the last few months. It is not impossible that the next Congress will enact legislation on the subject. If that does not happen, it is almost certain that both party platforms in* 1932 *will promise some action.*"

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"GIVING FREE ICE AT THE NORTH POLE"

From all this to-do the innocent and naive might believe that the misery of the masses has moved the ruling class to action. Such altruism is unknown to our bourgeoisie. In the very same article of the *Wall Street Journal* the following comment is the first warning as to what this sheet means by unemployment insurance:

> "It may be regarded as fortunate that the (Congressional) inquiry is in the hands of such a man as Senator Wagner. He is unlikely to undertake wildly impractical schemes and he is quite well aware of what might be involved in a scheme unwisely constructed or administered."

A more direct refusal of the demands of the workers *for* (1) *adequate insurance,* (2) *at the expense of profits, and* (3) *to be administered by the workers,* could hardly be formulated.

In fact, if we examine the proposals of the various capitalist agencies who profess to be for social insurance from the point of view of which proposal will most help raise the standard of living of the working class, we can find little difference amongst them. There is, for example, a syndicated bill sent out by the American Association for Labor Legislation which with slight local adaptations is being championed by some state federations of the A. F. of L. As presented by the Marysville convention of the California State Federation of Labor this bill is (1) a powerful weapon in the hands of the bosses against the workers, (2) it is aimed to give more relief to the bosses than to the workers, and (3) the workers carry the burden of supporting the fund.

HYPOCRISY OF A. F. OF L. BUROCRATS

These are not rhetorical statements but based on a careful examination of the provisions. We cite below some sections of the bill to prove this:

> Section 5: An employee shall not be entitled to benefits:
>
> 1—If he has lost his employment thru misconduct; or
>
> 2—If he has left his employment voluntarily without reasonable cause; or
>
> 3—If he has left or lost his employment due to a trade dispute in the establishment in which he was employed, so long as such trade dispute continues.

Who that knows factory life will not realize how these provisions would further enslave the workers? The terror, fear, and uncer-

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tainty which already fill the life of the factory worker today are not sufficient for the A. F. of L. burocrats. They must strengthen the hand of the boss still more; but with characteristic hypocrisy they do this under the guise of fighting for social insurance.

But maybe we could barter our alleged liberty for those things which the bill lists as "benefits." Again we must cite the provisions of the bill as to what benefits it proposes to give and thereby prove also our contentions, 2 and 3:

> Section 4, Point 3—Benefits shall be paid to an employee only;
>
> a) If he has been employed by one or more employers in the state for not less than 26 weeks during the two preceding calendar years;
>
> b) If he has paid his contribution towards the unemployment reserve fund for at least 26 weeks during the two preceding calendar years.
>
> Section 4, Point 2—Benefits shall be paid for a period to be fixed as provided herein but not for more than 13 weeks in one calendar year nor in a greater ratio than one week of benefit to four weeks of employment . . . during the two preceding calendar years. . . .
>
> Section 1, Point 1—An "employment" except where the context shows otherwise means any employment for hire within the state except employment as a farm laborer.

The above three points (1) *eliminate* 400,000 *workers on farms*, who make up the largest single section of the working class in California; (2) *eliminate everybody from insurance for two years after the bill becomes law;* (3) *eliminate the most needy section of the working class*—the disemployed for whom industry under capitalism has no room; (4) *eliminate the partially unemployed* who have not had work for six months in two years before benefits are supposed to be paid; (5) allow actual payments in such manner that a man who has had a job for only half a year in the two years after the bill goes into effect, and is out of a job for one whole year, can get three months' benefit if he meets all the other requirements—and this writer honestly believes that not much more than a baker's dozen could be found in the state who would satisfy all the other requirements.

We are not taking the trouble to cite all the other conditions in detail. For example, the bill provides that a man must take any job open to him even if the prevailing wage is $6 or $8 a week and by his skill he qualifies for a $40 a week job. There are many more, but these are enough.

Under these limitations only a rare and esoteric group of craven worms would be concerned, because of meeting the qualifications,

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as to exactly how much the benefit would amount to—but here it is: $7 for a single man, graduating to the tremendous sum of $12 for a married man. With bread at 10 to 15 cents a small loaf, and butter at 40 cents a pound, the unemployed have a bright future indeed under capitalism if this generous bill ever becomes law.

BUT REAL AID IS GIVEN—

But stay! We almost forgot. The above shows that the unemployed do not get any help. But how about the bosses?

The fund is to be raised by taxing the workers 1% weekly on their wages, and the bosses 2% of the payroll. It is forgotten to stipulate that the bosses shall not make the workers pay all by cutting wages 2% or by speeding production just a wee bit.

But this fund (remember, it is proposed by the A. F. of L. burocrats) is to be turned over to an industry board of five "appointed by the director of the department of industrial relations" of the official state government, "at least three of whom shall be employers." The labor fakers are indeed humble. Not even equals with their masters—even with the hypocritical mask of the usual "impartial" chairman, appointed by the governor. No. The governor appoints the whole works and, says the A. F. of L. burocracy, at least three shall be employers.

But here is the crowning glory of this "insurance bill for workers." The fund at the discretion of this board (of employers) need not be given out to the unemployed at all, irrespective of whether they have met all the requirements, but may be invested and used (Section 23, Point 2c) "to award dividends to employers based on their experience in maintaining regular employment."

We cite the sections carefully because otherwise few readers will find it possible to believe that in this age of literacy such an amazing piece of chicanery would be attempted even by the California labor leaders, already notorious throughout the world for such jobs as the Mooney-Billings frame-up.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The A. F. of L. officials find it necessary to play this farce because they first, of all the agents of the bosses, feel the pressure of the growing militancy of the workers. If one is to test whether the deception works there must be the full cast brought onto the stage. And so the National Association of Manufacturers has declared itself against the bill. In fact it sent its general counsel, J. A. Emery, to make speeches against it. That this gentleman should play his

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part in the great controversy over the A. F. of L. proposed bill (the title of the comedy is "Much Ado About Nothing") is not surprising. But the arguments he makes are very instructive.

OUR FRIENDS ARE APPOINTED AND THEN QUOTED

He calls to witness a whole series of "friends" of the working class. First Francis Place whom he calls "a distinguished radical of more than a century ago." Students of history will remember Place as a renegade who deserted the revolutionary movement of the time to become a prosperous manufacturer and a bourgeois member of Parliament. Of this character he quotes that man "must submit himself to the pain he cannot avoid without abandoning his duty." Meaning in plain English that a worker out of a job should starve patiently and, without complaint or violence because he cannot avoid it any way and because it is his duty. It would labor the point to answer such religious twaddle.

The next friend of the workers that the chief lawyer of the manufacturers calls is none other than Mrs. Sidney Webb, mate to Mr. Sidney Webb since made over into Lord Passfield by the King of England—no doubt for having such a smart wife. She says about that churchmouse's crumb called unemployment insurance in England: "The present state of things is intolerable and if it is permitted to continue it will bring about a national disaster. Relief out of public funds may itself become a disease of society." Lady Passfield's trepidation can be understood when it is known that her husband is now a member of the King's court and that national disaster to her means the overthrow of capitalism.

In addition he calls upon J. H. Thomas of Great Britain and Dr. Leo Wolman of New York—we've heard of both of these before—who prove that *giving relief to the unemployed is bringing about depressions!* Amazing—but true. Karl Marx should never have confused us in the first place with any theories to the contrary!

CAPITALIST PRODUCTION BEYOND CAPITALIST CONTROL

However, after passing over these immortal intellectual contributions we come to some serious admissions from so leading an adviser to the powerful manufacturers' association.

Unlike Lovestone he recognizes that the United States is subject to the same crises and economic laws, with allowance for uneven development, that all other countries are. Showing that United States capitalism is heading for the situation that England and Germany are now in, he warns against any concession to the working

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class. Especially does he urge in this direction since the perspective in the long run is for *increased unemployment* because of the anarchy in capitalist production, and "each year will witness new demands for the enlargement of the benefits, the inclusion of new beneficiaries and the expansion of the fund." First he absolves the entrepreneur from responsibility for the unemployment situation, placing the forces which control capitalist economy beyond the control of the capitalist. The circumstances make him see the impossibility of an "organized capitalism," that swan song which Lovestone tried to sing for the revolutionary movement. Emery says to the manufacturers:

> "It is true that within limits incompetent management may be responsible for the failure of a particular enterprise, but, broadly speaking, neither individual nor corporate employers can control the circumstances which make for the rise and fall of the demand for commodities or services which reacts upon the expansion and contraction of all forms of employment. . . . Therefore with every effort upon your part, your capacity to maintain your industries rests upon a variety of circumstances, affecting your customers not merely in the United States but throughout the world, over which you can exert little control."

THE IRRECONCILABLE CONTRADICTION

But conveniently forgetting the source of the manufacturers' profits he holds that the inability of the manufacturer to organize capitalism takes from him any responsibility for the unemployed who are brought into being by this chaos. He then warns the boss class against any social insurance proposals based on the experiences in European countries:

> "In Germany the original rate of assessment [for the insurance fund] was 1½% of the employers' payroll and an equal amount of the employees' wage. By January 1, 1930, this was raised to 1¾% in each instance. In July, 1930, it was increased to 2½% for each, and by October the present assessment of 3¼% of the employer's payroll and the employee's wage was in effect. Today the total assessment is thus 6½% of the wage fund and the solvency of the insurance reserve is maintained only by continuous government loans, which have lifted the present cost for the year to some $372,000,000.
>
> "The British experience is even more illuminating. Beginning with limited benefits under the act of 1912 necessity has enlarged the scheme under continuous pressure until time limitation upon the benefit has been abandoned and it endures as long as unemployment continues. Beginning as is proposed here as a joint contribution of employer and employee to a common fund for which the state paid the cost of administration, the government has been called upon to loan steadily to maintain the fund's solvency. The cost for the

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> last year approximated $520,000,000. Within a fortnight, we have heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking for the fiscal department of the Labor government, warn the Parliament that industry could not stand another penny of tax for social purposes without irreparable injury. Within forty-eight hours the same Chancellor had moved that the limitation upon the loans which the government may make to the insurance fund shall be lifted from $350,000,000 to $450,000,000."

The struggle over the question of social insurance is a part of the class struggle—namely, a struggle between the classes for a larger share of the totality of production. Emery's formulation of the problem for the American capitalist class is aimed at pointing out the lesson of England and Germany, and directing attention towards finding a way whereby the parasitism which capitalism creates by eliminating millions of humans from industry shall not affect the profits of the owners. His program is that the unemployed should starve to death and eliminate themselves as a problem, or that the rest of the working class should carry the burden of feeding them. Just as the workers have always fought directly on the questions of hours and wages in order to obtain the highest possible standard of living, so in a period of unemployment, premature old age increasing with the intensity of the exploitation of labor, and accidents growing greater with the speed of production, the working class must fight to obtain the greatest degree of social insurance *at the expense of profits* in order to recoup as much as possible in living conditions of what it automatically loses by the very development of capitalist production. The contradiction which Emery sees in Snowden's action increasing loans to the insurance fund in the face of the danger of "irreparable injury" is easily explainable by the stage which British imperialism has reached. It has only one possible synthesis. Soon the workers will discover, despite these dry bones thrown by the Snowdens, who weep with every penny spent for workers' relief while they help the capitalist class to plunder at an unparallelled rate, that the problem is only solvable as the Russian workers and peasants solved it. The only real guarantee against unemployment that is possible is the establishment of the inviolate right to participate usefully in production, and that can exist only under Socialism, such as is being built in the U.S.S.R. Unemployment insurance can at best be a temporary arrangement for decent living until industry can be adjusted to the required conditions, as in the earlier stages of the U.S.S.R., or at worst a constant struggle — even after the bill becomes a law as the experience of Great Britain and Germany has shown — to keep a bare animal existence, as is the case in all capitalist countries where the law has

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been adopted. Under capitalism laws are not administered for the benefit of the workers but in the interests of the ruling class.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND ITS ROLE IN WAGE CUTTING

But in the United States even this minimum concession has not been granted to the workers. The boss class in the country is moving very cautiously and not granting one soup bowl more than it is forced to. The real reason for this is frankly stated in the statement of the general counsel of the National Association of Manufacturers. He throws to the winds Hoover's and Green's nonsense about the fear of corrupting the "rugged individualism of the American worker" and frankly states:

> "The real danger of unlimited relief of unemployment lies not in the fear of demoralizing individual workmen, but in the fear of demoralizing governments, employers, and trade union officials so that they take less thought about prevention of unemployment."

But "thought about prevention of unemployment" does not mean some vague economic science which must be evolved. It means, says our informant, that,

> "The fear of causing unemployment may vanish from the minds of trade union negotiators and lead to excessive rigidity of wages and so to unemployment."

Translating this into the language of the worker it means that through not giving unemployment insurance the workers will be forced to accept the agreements of the official trade union fakers for lower wages so that the bosses may successfully compete with the other imperialist powers for foreign markets, thereby maintaining production and preventing unemployment in the United States. Understanding the law of the limits of world consumption in contradiction to unlimited expansion in production, one would be a hopeless idiot to accept this as a solution for capitalism, a prevention of unemployment. But what is clear from the very formulation of the spokesman of the manufacturers is that the struggle for unemployment insurance is not only a fight for increasing the share of the working class as a whole in the national income, but is more specifically also a struggle against wage cuts.

AGAINST SOCIAL DEMAGOGY

It is for these reasons that our struggle for social insurance has been so bitter, and will take tremendous effort in militant struggle on the part of the working class before we can force the ruling class

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to grant it. Our Party, in the course of the struggle, must be ever alert that the workers are not led into reformist channels, such as any support to the attempts of the A. F. of L. to win support for the bill cited in this article. We must expose the farce played between the A. F. of L. and the manufacturers and clarify the atmosphere by pressing our proposals forward more boldly than ever. We must fight not only for social insurance, but for adequate social insurance managed by the workers at the expense of the profits of the bosses.

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Rationalization and Its Consequences in the Building Construction Industry in the United States

By A. PETERSON

CAPITALIST economists speak with pride about the "coordination of building concerns," the simplification of plans, the standardization of specification, the induction of new methods, techniques, and new synthetic materials, the application of scientific knowledge, organizational changes, and the increased use of "labor saving" machinery, which are all combined with the intensified speeding up of production in the building construction industry. "The reason for all these methods, is to have the maximum production at the minimum cost, especially the minimum labor cost."

Various methods of speeding the workers and production in building construction work had developed considerably before the World War, but it was in the post-war building boom that the new rationalization methods developed to such a degree that the period was termed by capitalist enthusiasts "The Revolution in the Construction Industry in the U. S. A." In order fully to understand the extent of the rationalization methods and what the workers in this industry inherited from the "building boom," it is necessary to make a review of this period.

CAUSES OF THE POST-WAR BUILDING BOOM

During the World War, industry was concentrated on war materials. Building-trade workers were mobilized for ship building in air craft factories and in the construction of army camps in various sections of the country. Much of the regular building construction was put off. During the war there was a flow of population into the industrial centers. The post-war industrial expansion was also a factor in the rapid growth of cities.

All this caused an acute shortage in residential and industrial buildings immediately after the World War. Landlords raised rent as high as possible. It became an ideal time for all the sharks, big

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and little, to invest in real estate and reap high profits. The building boom came into existence.

ROLE OF FINANCE CAPITAL

The banks, whose business it is to place their funds into circulation at the highest possible profits, began to pour money into real estate, building loans, mortgages, and real estate investments. The title trust companies, the house of Morgan, all sizes of banking institutions, became the leading factors in this gamble. Banking institutions established real estate departments for the purpose. It was under the guidance of finance capital that the building industry began to be "rationalized."

Inflation of prices on real estate was an important factor in the boom. For instance, a two-family brick house which sold in May, 1923, for $13,000, brought $18,000 in August, 1923, and sold for $21,000 in 1927. There was a similar inflation in rent. This situation meant quick profits, and the problem for the money makers was how to speed the erection of a building in order to realize quicker profits both from greater exploitation of the building workers and from real estate manipulation.

SPEEDING CONSTRUCTION AND THE WORKERS

Big building companies were organized which began to erect rows of houses of standard sizes, with standard models and plans.

Mechanization in the construction industry was pushed along by more work in the factory and less work on the job. Floor slabs, trusses, concrete forms were made in the factory. Metal trim was introduced in place of wood trim, terra cotta took the place of brick. Western lumber mills greatly enlarged their business and great quantities of stock sized doors, sashes, and trim began to appear on the building market. Mail order houses such as Sears-Roebuck & Co. entered the business, shipping parts of houses, ready to be put together on the job. Also lower ceilings, thinner brick walls, plasterboard eliminating laths, spraying machines, power saws, floor scrapers, electric drills, and various types of cutting apparatus have eliminated labor on the job. "Satisfactory portable air compressors have trebled the use of pneumatic tools during the nine years from 1920 to 1929." (*Engineering News Record*, February, 1929.)

On sky scrapers in the big cities, and especially on bridges, tunnels, subway construction, and other heavy construction work, engineering science was mobilized for methods of eliminating and speeding labor. We find on heavy construction work the seven-drum hoist

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machines which lift a platform with two loaded wheelbarrows at a speed of 500 feet a minute; the bucket loader, self-feeding, self-propelling; the 200 ampere welder; the lumber and steel pile driver; the dragline excavator; and other such machinery. All of these things play their part, not only reducing the number of workers required on the job, but in compelling the workers who tend them not to lose a second but to strain every nerve and muscle to follow the speed of the machines.

The increased productivity resulting from the introduction of these speed-up devices is apparent from the following figures (*Recent Economic Changes in the United States*, p. 248): In 1919 it required a gang of 74 for completing 350 feet of concrete pavement a day; in 1928, 45 men were completing 800 feet.

On heavy construction work skill is now eliminated to such an extent that the common laborer in many instances takes the place of the mechanic. For example, almost all the timber work in tunnels and on track construction is done not by carpenters but by laborers.

The building inspector became the means of much saving in the cost of construction. With graft more widespread than ever before the inspector permitted the use of rotten material, overlooked he required depth in the digging of foundations, the quality of the work, and the "legal" safety devices, and in this way made a direct contribution to the rise in the number of accidents on construction work.

WAGE RATES

Some of the methods for speeding-up the workers on the job served the bosses just as well as belts and conveyors in manufacturing plants. The building industry is mainly subject to conditions of the local market and less to the national market, and more remotely to the international market. The cost of building and rates of wages therefore vary in different localities. For instance, in 1925 a two-family brick house with all improvements, in the city of New York, deducting the value of the lot, was priced at $18,000. The same house, deducting the value of the lot, in Atlanta, Ga., was priced at $7,000.

Because of this variation in price and speculative profits, the bosses in some localities were willing to pay $1 a day more in wages. This would be added to the cost of the building. But this does not mean that the additional wages were paid out of speculative profits. On the contrary the speed-up intensifies exploitation and merely a small part of the extra profits from the speed-up is paid out in the extra wages. At a time like this it was also important to avoid labor

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troubles, especially if this could be done at the workers' expense, by intensifying exploitation.

The method of paying the men on the job, not according to the prevailing rate of wages in the trade but according to the amount of work they produced in a day, was very efficient in speeding them up. It was piece work plus a premium. In practice it meant, "If you can reach only a minimum standard of production you cannot expect us to pay the union scale of wages. But if you go at top speed we are willing to pay you above the prevailing union scale." Another outstanding method was to pick out the fastest hustler, pay him the highest wages, and thus spur on the other workers.

This spurring on of the workers developed to such a stage that the speed with which a building was completed in the United States became the marvel of the world. This speed can best be illustrated by the following comparison of standards in a man-day, between 1900 and 1930, for work where there were no machines used but the same type of tools in 1930 as in 1900.

In some localities this comparison runs as follows:

	1900	1930
Painters		
Windows	35	70 to 120
Kalsomining ceilings (for 2 men)	25	65 to 70
Carpenters		
Base (rooms)	6	12
Jambs	16	40 to 60

A striking example of simplification of materials plus intensive speed-up is plumbing. A day's work for a plumber in 1900 was one bathroom, while in 1930 it is four bathrooms a day. These figures are from my personal experience on jobs.

A. F. OF L. COLLABORATION WITH RATIONALIZATION

In the open-shop drive against the building-trade workers in San Francisco in 1921 there was a manifestation of the power of a united front against the workers in the industry. Some contractors who signed with the unions could not obtain building material, not only in San Francisco but in the entire United States, and were compelled to import material from Belgium.

In 1922 the American Construction Council was organized—a more unified national organization, which played a great role in rationalizing the construction industry. This organization included a long and interesting list of members—architects, engineers, general contractors, sub-contractors, "*construction labor*" (union offi-

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cials), manufacturers of material and equipment, dealers in material and equipment, financial surety, bonding, real estate, accounting, insurance, and building and loan organizations; chambers of commerce, and boards of trade; public utility construction departments; representatives of federal, state, county, and municipal bureaus and departments concerned with construction; national associations of builders' exchanges and building-trades employers' associations, and federations of building interests.

What did the union officials have to do in such a family of bankers, government institutions, and chambers of commerce? They had a definite role in this great family. They worked for the "welfare of the industry" and helped establish the ethics for this welfare.

The building-trade workers tasted the results of these ethics. Let us examine some of the principles of the code, and whom it served. These principles included discussion of union agreements behind closed doors; shaping a "mutual policy" in the industry; elimination of labor troubles; an honest-day's-work clause in agreements; no limitation as to the amount of work a man is to perform during his working day; the right of the bosses to hire and fire at will; and above all, the cooperation of organized labor (meaning union officials) in helping pass legislation to encourage construction (the assurance of more profits for investors).

On the job the union officials collaborated with the bosses in all their schemes to speed the workers. Their role became similar to the role of the building inspector, namely to take graft, to overlook union rules and regulations, and to betray the membership in the interest of the boss.

These union grafters tried to impress upon the bosses that they were in a position to create labor troubles, and that they wanted to come to terms. The ethics of "Live and let live" were established, which meant in reality, "Rob and let others rob."

Let us see how the code worked in practice. The closed shop agreement gave the unions the right of sympathetic strikes. It meant that when there were non-union workers of any craft the business agent had the right to call on strike all the crafts on the job. But an understanding was reached during the boom that when there were not enough competent union men available, non-union men would be permitted, and in practice the union faker allowed the use of non-union men on the job. He also allowed men to work more than eight hours a day, issued permits for Saturday afternoon work, permitted use of non-union material, and supplied hustlers on the job.

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CONSEQUENCES OF RATIONALIZATION

When we study even the official figures, which are far from complete, we get some idea of where these rationalization methods are leading the building construction workers.

The National Bureau of Economic Research (*Recent Economic Changes*, Vol. I, p. 225) reports that even as far back as 1925 in some cities there was a decline of 15 to 20 per cent in construction. On a national scale, the country was "overbuilt" in 1925. This means that from 1925 until the general crisis in 1929, building construction continued on an unsound basis. The passage of the McFadden act in 1927, which permitted national banks to invest as much as one-half of their savings deposits in realty loans for periods up to five years, brought the pourings of more billions into building construction, and is at present an added factor in the unsound conditions of many banks.

In order to get an idea of how a permanent unemployed reserve army is growing in the construction industry, an army that would under normal conditions be out of a job even in the busy season, let us see some official figures on value of contracts awarded since 1920, price of building materials, and the number of employed and unemployed in the industry since 1920.

Take first the table of value of contracts awarded. These tables are on pages 220-221, Vol. I of *Recent Economic Changes*, and although we have enough evidence that Hoover's committee greatly underestimated the number of unemployed, we will take the figures as they are given.

(Sources: Figures on contracts awarded are furnished by the F. W. Dodge Corporation. Sources for the prices of building materials are: Department of Labor; lumber, steel, cement and common labor, *Engineering News* Record; standard factory building, Aberthaw Co.; retail prices of building materials in 45 cities, Department of Commerce.)

Total value of building contracts in the United States was:

Year	*Amount*	*Index of Price of Building Material*
1920	$3,337,647,000	264.1
1921	3,068,983,000	165.4
1922	4,329,750,000	168.4
1923	4,768,100,000	189.1
1924	5,237,080,000	175.1
1925	6,662,000,000	175.1
1926	6,901,580,000	173.4
1927	6,786,580,000	162.4

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Vol. II, page 477, *Recent Economic Changes*, gives the following figures on employed and unemployed in the building construction industry, except highways (figures supplied by the National Research Committee). These figures on unemployment are declared by the bosses' statisticians to be minimum figures:

Year	*Total No. Surveyed*	*Employed*	*Unemployed*
1920	932,000	702,000	230,000
1921	932,000	684,000	248,000
1922	1,199,000	968,000	239,000
1923	1,277,000	1,057,000	220,000
1924	1,358,000	1,002,000	350,000
1925	1,613,000	1,268,000	345,000
1926	1,594,000	1,314,000	280,000
1927	1,563,000	1,141,000	422,000

The following figures of the percentage of unemployment by months show a minimum of 19 per cent unemployed in the busy month of August.

1927		1928			1929	
Oct.,	22 per cent	Jan.,	36 per cent	July, 24 per cent	Jan.,	30 per cent
Nov.,	24 "	Feb.,	39 "	Aug., 19 "	Feb.,	30 "
Dec.,	36 "	Mar.,	38 "	Sept., 22 "	Mar.,	34 "
		Apr.,	32 "	Oct., 19 "	Apr.,	29 "
		May,	25 "	Nov., 21 "	May,	26 "
		June,	22 "	Dec., 23 "		

What do all these figures prove? They prove that in a period when value of awarded contracts was mounting, when the shortage that had been created in residential and industrial buildings during the war was being made up, when the demands for new buildings, due to the post-war "prosperity" was also being covered, and when due to the easy financing and unsound speculation, building went on at an overproduction rate—in such a boom period we have had since 1920 a standing army of unemployed in the building trades numbering at its lowest 220,000 in 1923, and growing since then in spite of the fact that the value of contracts awarded is mounting.

When we take union wages on a country-wide scale, we find that 65 per cent of the workers earn less than $40 a week; 35 per cent less than $25. Moreover, the average number of weeks a building-trade worker is employed during the year in normal times is 34.

This is for union men. But we should have in mind that the building industry is far from being unionized. Out of the 2,487,500 in the industry, including alteration workers, according to the 1920 census, the total membership in the A. F. of L. unions in 1920

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was 800,000. This includes such appendages as furniture workers, telephone workers, and light and power workers, who belong to the manufacturing and not to the construction industries. This proves that only about one-third of the building trades workers are in the A. F. of L. unions, and these can hardly be called organized. The over 65 per cent unorganized in the industry did not fare even so well.

MANY ACCIDENTS

For such wages the building construction workers in the United States sacrificed 11 killed every working day, or 2,200 annually. They are exposed to accidents only second in percentage although greater in number in comparison with the mining industry. They suffer from occupational diseases. They are thrown on the scrap heap at the age of 40. Except for grossly inadequate accident compensation laws, they remain without social insurance legislation in the richest country in the world, unprotected in old age or in times of unemployment.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics and Information in its October, 1930, report puts the accidents in construction work 4 per cent higher than in 1928-1929 (and this is in spite of the fact that there are about 20 per cent less workers employed in construction work in 1930 than in 1929). Its total is 20 per cent above the total of 1925-1926.

Only in the four states, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and California, more than 68,000 accidents were reported for the year of which 650 were fatal. In Illinois 82 accidents were reported among children on construction work under the age of 18.

CRISIS BRINGS MORE RATIONALIZATION

The present crisis further disrupts the building industry, intensifies the effects of rationalization, and worsens the conditions of the building trades workers.

As if this is not enough, when we read the current numbers of the *Engineering News Record*, or the *Manufacturing News*, we see articles to the effect that in order to adjust building construction to the new requirements, more of this rationalization is necessary. And this is not empty talk.

HOOVER'S INDUSTRIAL RELIEF PROGRAM

Hoover's committee figured out that the annual addition of 1,600,000 inhabitants in the United States, due to the growth of population, will call for 400,000 new homes a year. All of 400,000

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new homes to keep 2,500,000 building construction workers busy!

Hoover's emergency council in 1929 broadcast to us the publicity on his $3,000,000,000 public works program as a relief from the crisis. William Green, president of the A. F. of L., who participated in this emergency council and who gave his gentleman's word on a no-strike policy, wrote lengthy articles, and made lengthy speeches, about the greatness of Hoover and his public works program. Now we have in the February 5, 1931, issue of the *Engineering News Record* a table of value of contracts for the years 1928-29-30 and the prospects for 1931, based on a national survey. These figures prove that Hoover's $3,000,000,000 construction program was not in addtion to the regular expenditure and could provide no relief for unemployment. The figures follow:

Year		*Public Works*	*Utilities*	*Industrial*
1928		$3,622,000,000	$1,258,000,000	$690,000,000
1929		3,121,000,000	1,495,000,000	825,000,000
1930		3,139,000,000	1,670,000,000	500,000,000
1931	(pros.)	3,824,000,000	1,473,000,000	500,000,000
		Commercial	*Dwellings*	*Total*
1928		$1,410,000,000	$3,020,000,000	$10,000,000,000
1929		1,609,000,000	2,080,000,000	9,130,000,000
1930		1,291,000,000	1,200,000,000	7,800,000,000
1931	(pros.)	1,485,000,000	1,380,000,000	8,712,000,000

This same issue of the *Engineering News Record* gives the average unemployed in the building trades in the United States in 1930 as 50 per cent.

According to these figures, the increase in value of public work contracts from 1929 to 1930 was $18,000,000, and the prospects for 1931 are $703,000,000 above the 1929 level. This is surely far from a $3,000,000,000 extra construction program, and far from solves the consequences of rationalization and the crisis in the building construction industry of the United States, an industry which runs second to the railroad industry in the amount of money invested. We should also note here the fact that it is the great drop in dwellings from 1928 (almost 60 per cent) that swelled the number of unemployed in the building trades from the highest previous percentage of 39 per cent in February, 1928, to the present conditions of over 50 per cent unemployed. The drop in the total value of contracts was around 22 per cent.

A. F. OF L. APPARATUS CORRUPT

Rationalization in the building construction industry, which is in process of further development, has created a situation where im-

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pending struggles are ahead for the workers in this industry. In these struggles the membership of the A. F. of L. unions in the building trades will come closer to facts which will make them realize more clearly that an apparatus with 17 international unions in the industry, union agreements expiring at different times, constant jurisdictional fights, and a corrupt bureaucratic machine that collaborates with real estate investors and does not want to develop the unions as a unified fighting body ready to meet an attack, is not the organization that can lead the building construction workers.

The apparatus and officialdom of these A. F. of L. unions are a corrupt machine that is surely not subject to reformation, as some fake progressives wish to make the discontented members in these unions believe.

The union officials in the building trades are a part of the gang of Greens and Wolls of the A. F. of L. They collaborate and cooperate in trying to help pull the capitalist chariot out of all the swamps in which it mires. And a driving force for this chariot is more and more rationalization in order to safeguard profits, without which capitalism cannot exist.

"The welfare of industry comes first," said Broach, the tsar of the electrical workers' union and one of the outstanding figures in the building trades A. F. of L. unions.

Since the collapse of the building boom, these A. F. of L. unions have been in a weaker position, less able to defend themselves against the bosses. The bosses are trying to use the army of unorganized as a reserve in their attempts to initiate an open-shop drive. In many instances they are already organizing this drive, and if it has not yet taken place on a national scale it is because they are sure that the union bureaucrats will cooperate in favor of the bosses and sell out the interests of the workers. This is a safer method than trying an open fight against the growing militancy of the rank and file.

Since the union officials are in collaboration with the bosses, prevailing union rates of wages are meaningless. Unofficial wage cuts for the building trades workers are already a fact, and the union officials cooperate in an official wage cutting program for the building trades, which is under way.

NEED FOR MILITANT LEADECSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The building construction workers of the United States are now more than ever in the need of leadership. Now is the time for the Building Construction Workers Industrial League to organize the unorganized, to guide the misled A. F. of L. union membership, through the united front from below, on all the problems and issues

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confronting them, to clear out illusions and traditions, and to become the leader of the more than 2,500,000 workers in their coming struggles.

The immediate steps to be taken by the T. U. U. L. in relation to the construction industry are the following:

1. Setting up of a national provisional committee and the drafting of a program of struggle for the industry, to combine both the organization of the unorganized, and work in the old unions.
2. Taking of steps to form local unions or leagues of the T. U. U. L. where possible.
3. Organization of the left-wing forces in the old unions.
4. Calling, within the shortest possible time, a conference to organize the National Building Trades and Construction Workers Industrial League.
5. The leagues, both local and national, to have the task of combining the activities of the T. U. U. L. unions and the work in the old unions.

The drafting of a national program for the building construction industry is the work of a national committee. But such a program of action will have to take into consideration, among other points, the following:

A situation is already created in this industry where the struggle for the seven-hour day and five-day week without reduction in wages is imminent. But the seven-hour day and five-day week will not be a cure to any great extent, as long as the intensive speed-up is not checked. The conducting of a bitter fight to check this intensive speed-up is a question of bread and butter for the workers in the building construction industry.

In order to check speed-up on the jobs and in the shops there must be established job and shop control, and this is possible only by the establishment of job and shop committees composed of rank and file workers.

These job and shop committees will become a real weapon in the interest of the workers only when the workers in the industry are strengthened organizationally.

In order to form a united front against the bosses, we must push the fight against race discrimination and persecution of the foreign born. Equal pay for equal work, and abolition of high initiation fees are also necessary demands. Adequate social legislation, such as adequate working men's compensation, requirement of safety devices, preventive measures against occupational diseases, and old age and unemployment insurance, are among the demands which must be formulated. With such an enormous number of unemployed and

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part-time workers the fight for unemployment relief and insurance is of special importance. Around these struggles we must carry on an intensive organizational drive.

Our Party members will have to learn to realize more thoroughly the importance of winning the rank and file membership in the A. F. of L. unions for the revolutionary unions affiliated with the T. U. U. L. The fight against the A. F. of L. bureaucracy must be linked up with the economic interests of the workers—must be a fight against the bosses and bureaucrats. Our aim must not be that of splitting off small militant groups, but the taking of large masses of workers with us. Incidentally, comrades should bear in their mind that these building-trades unions are the backbone of the A. F. of L.

In their coming struggles against capitalist rationalization, the building construction workers in the United States, as well as the workers in other industries, will realize more fully that their economic struggles against the bosses, and political struggles against the bosses' government, are inevitable, that there are problems and evils confronting them which cannot be solved under capitalism, that they are part of the working class, and must fight under the banner of the Party of their own class, under the banner of the Communist Party of the United States.

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The Decline of the Garvey Movement

By CYRIL BRIGGS

GARVEYISM, or Negro Zionism, rose on the crest of the wave of discontent and revolutionary ferment which swept the capitalist world as a result of the post-war crisis.

Increased national oppression of the Negroes, arising out of the post-war crisis, together with the democratic slogans thrown out by the liberal-imperialist demagogues during the World War (right of self-determination for all nations, etc.) served to bring to the surface the latent national aspirations of the Negro masses. These aspirations were considerably strengthened with the return of the Negro workers and poor farmers who had been conscripted to "save the world for democracy." These returned with a wider horizon, new perspectives of human rights and a new confidence in themselves as a result of their experiences and disillusionment in the war. Their return strengthened the morale of the Negro masses and stiffened their resistance. So-called race riots took the place of lynching bees and massacres. The Negro masses were fighting back. In addition, many of the more politically advanced of the Negro workers were looking to the example of the victorious Russian proletariat as the way out of their oppression. The conviction was growing that the proletarian revolution in Russia was the beginning of a world-wide *united* movement of down-trodden classes and oppressed peoples. Even larger numbers of the Negro masses were becoming more favorable toward the revolutionary labor movement.

DISTORTION OF NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT BY THE REFORMISTS

This growing national revolutionary sentiment was seized upon by the Negro petty bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the demagogue, Marcus Garvey, and diverted into utopian, reactionary, "Back to Africa" channels. There were various other reformist attempts to formulate the demands of the Negro masses and to create a program of action which would appeal to all elements of the dissatisfied Negro people. None of these met with even the partial and temporary success which greeted the Garvey movement.

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The leadership of the Garvey Movement consisted of the poorest stratum of the Negro intellectuals—declassed elements, struggling business men and preachers, lawyers without a brief, etc.—who stood more or less close to the Negro masses and felt sharply the effects of the crisis. The movement represented a split-away from the official Negro bourgeois leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People which even then was already linked up with the imperialists.

The main social base of the movement was the Negro agricultural workers and the farming masses groaning under the terrific oppression of peonage and share cropper slavery, and the backward sections of the Negro industrial workers, for the most part recent migrants from the plantations into the industrial centers of the North and South. These saw in the movement an escape from national oppression, a struggle for Negro rights throughout the world, including freedom from the oppression of the southern landlords and for ownership of the land. To the small advanced industrial Negro proletariat, who were experienced in the class struggle, the Garvey movement had little appeal.

While the movement never had the millions organizationally enrolled that its leaders claimed, it did have in 1921, at the time of its second congress, nearly 100,000 members on its books, as revealed in an analysis made by W. A. Domingo[1] of the deliberately confused financial statement given by the leadership to the delegates at the Second Congress. Moreover, the movement exercised a tremendous ideological influence over millions of Negroes outside its ranks.

REFLECTED MILITANCY OF THE MASSES IN ITS EARLY STAGES

The movement began as a radical petty bourgeois national movement, reflecting to a great extent in its early stages the militancy of the toiling masses, and in its demands expressing their readiness for struggle against oppression in the United States. From the very beginning there were two sides inherent to the movement: a democratic side and a reactionary side. In the early stage the democratic side dominated. To get the masses into the movement, the national reformist leaders were forced to resort to demagogy. The pressure of the militant masses in the movement further forced them to adopt progressive slogans. The program of the first congress was full of militant demands expressing the readiness for struggle in the United States.

[1]In an article in the Crusader Magazine, entitled "Figures Never Lie But Liars Do Figure."

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A Negro mass movement with such perspectives was correctly construed by the imperialists as a direct threat to imperialism, and pressure began to be put on the leadership. A threat of the imperialists, inspired and backed by the leadership of the N. A. A. C. P., to exclude Garvey from the country on his return from a tour of the West Indies brought about the complete and abject capitulation of the national reformist leaders. Crawling on his knees before the imperialists, Garvey enunciated the infamous doctrine that "the Negro must be loyal to all flags under which he lives." This was a complete negation of the Negro liberation struggle. It was followed by an agreement with the Ku Klux Klan, in which the reformists catered for the support of the southern senators in an attempt to secure the "repatriation" of the Negro masses by deportation to Liberia.

The objective difficulties and subjective weakness of the movement, arising out of reformist leadership and its attempt to harmonize the demands of all the dissatisfied elements among the Negro people, inevitably led to the betrayal of the toiling masses.

SURRENDERED RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF NEGRO MAJORITIES OF U. S. AND WEST INDIES

While never actually waging a real struggle for national liberation the movement did make some militant demands in the beginning. However, these demands were soon thrown overboard as the reactionary side of the movement gained dominance. There followed a complete and shameful abandonment and betrayal of the struggles of the Negro masses of the United States and the West Indies. The right of the Negro majorities in the West Indies and in the Black Belt of the United States to determine and control their own government was as completely negated by the Garvey national reformists as by the imperialists. The Garvey movement became a tool of the imperialists. Even its struggle slogans for the liberation of the African peoples, which had always been given main stress, were abandoned and the movement began to peddle the illusion of a *peaceful return to Africa.*

At first giving expression to the disgust which the Negro masses felt for the religious illusions of liberation through "divine" intervention, etc., the Garvey movement became one of the main social carriers of these illusions among the masses, with Marcus Garvey taking on the role of High Priest after the resignation and defection of the Chaplain-General, Bishop McGuire. Feudal orders, high sounding titles and various commercial adventures were substituted for the struggle demands of the earlier stages.

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How completely the reactionary side came to dominate the movement is shown in (1) its acceptance of the Ku Klux Klan viewpoint that the United States is a white man's country and that the Negro masses living here are rightfully denied all democratic rights; (2) the rejection by the leaders at the 1929 convention in Jamaica, B. W. I., of a resolution condemning imperialism.

In both cases the betrayals just noted were carried to their logical conclusion, in Garvey's bid for an alliance with the Ku Klux Klan, and in an article he wrote in the *Black Man* (Jamaica organ of the movement) shortly after the 1929 convention in which he attacked the Jamaica workers for organizing into unions of the T.U.U.L. to better their conditions. In this article he attacked Communism as a menace to the imperialists and warned the Negro masses of Jamaica that they "would not dare accept and foster something tabooed by the mother country." So complete was the counter-revolutionary degeneration of the national reformists that the oppressing imperialism was openly accepted by them as their "mother country!" The imperialist oppressors were presented to the masses as "friends who have treated him (the Negro) if not fairly, with some kind of consideration!"

The decline of the movement synchronized with the subsiding of the post war crisis. As a result both of the lessening of the economic pressure on the masses and the awakening of the most militant sections of the membership to the betrayals being carried out by the national reformist behind the gesture of struggle phrases and demagogy, the masses began to drop away from the movement. Relieved of the pressure of the militant masses the movement began to assert more and more its reactionary and anti-democratic side.

Already at the Second Congress it was evident that the national reformists were losing their grip on the masses. As a result of the widespread exposures carried on by the Negro radicals[2] against the dishonest business schemes and consistent betrayals of the national Negro liberation movement by the Garvey reformists, the sympathetic masses outside of the organization were becoming more and more critical of the national reformists. Within the organization itself there was such wide-spread dissatisfaction that the top leadership was forced to make sacrifical goats of several rubber stamp lieutenants. Within a few months of the closing of the Second Congress, the first big mass defections occurred (California,

[2]The Negro radicals referred to are Richard B. Moore, Otto Huiswoud, W. A. Domingo, Cyril Briggs, and Hubert Harrison before his degeneration. Domingo was never a member of the Party. Huiswoud, Briggs and Moore were members of the Communist fraction in the African Blood Brotherhood.

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Philadelphia). These revolts, however, were led by reformists and were significant only from the point of view of the growing disintegration of the movement. From 1921, the movement has undergone a continuous process of deterioration and break-up, as the masses increasingly came to realize the treacherous character of the national reformist leaders.

The recent decision of Garvey to sell the Jamaica properties of the organization (pocketing the proceeds) and take up his residence in Europe, (far from the masses he has plundered and betrayed), denotes a high stage in the collapse of this reactionary movement, whose dangerous ideology, as pointed out by the C. I., bears not a single democratic trait.

Historically however the movement has certain progressive achievements. It undoubtedly helped to crystalize the national aspirations of the Negro masses. Moreover, the Negro masses achieved a certain political ripening as a result of their experience and disillusionment with this movement.

NEW NEGRO LIBERATION MOVEMENT GOES FORWARD UNDER THE HEGEMONY OF THE NEGRO PROLETARIAT

The betrayal of these aspirations and the national liberation struggle by the Garvey national reformists was facilitated by (1) the immaturity of the Negro working-class; (2) the weakness both in theoretical and in organizational strength of the revolutionary labor movement in the United Sates at that time.

To-day as the result of large-scale migrations into the industrial centers of large numbers of Negroes from the plantations, a strong Negro proletariat has come into being, developing in the class struggle and freeing themselves of petty bourgeois influences and reformist illusions. Further, as the result of the present crisis and the correct application by the Communist Party of the U. S. A. of the C. I. line on the Negro question, the Negro liberation movement again goes forward, this time under the sign of proletarian hegemony, and wages a relentless fight against imperialism and for unconditional Negro equality, including the right of self-determination of the Negro majorities in the Black Belt of the South, in the West Indies and the Negro peoples of Africa.

Before concluding, it is necessary to emphasize here that the Garvey movement, while in decline and on the verge of collapse, still represents a most dangerous reactionary force, exercising considerable ideological influence over large masses of Negroes. It will not do to ignore this movement which is most dangerous in its disintegration because of the desperate attempts being made by the

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national reformists leaders to maintain their influence over the Negro masses, either by saving the movement as it is or by luring the dissastisfied masses into other organizations under the control of the national reformists.

The situation affords considerable opportunity for the winning of the Negro masses away from the influence of the reformists and in another article I will deal with the tasks of the Party in relation to the disintegration and decline of the Garvey Movement.

A CORRECTION

In the article "Blood Stained Nitrates of Chile" which appeared in the May issue of THE COMMUNIST a typographical error occurred. On page 464 in the fourth paragraph where it reads "loan of $500,000,000," it should read "loan of $500,000."

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A "Model" Colony of Yankee Imperialism

By D. R. D.

(Continued from last issue)

THE PLANTATION SYSTEM IN THE CARIBBEAN AREA

THE plantation system is firmly entrenched in many parts of the world. To all appearances a plantation is very much the same thing wherever you happen to stumble across one—in Florida or in Porto Rico, now, as it was one hundred years ago. The first duty of a Marxist, however, is not to let himself be deceived by appearances.

As a form of economic penetration into backward tropical countries, the plantation system antedates the epoch of imperialism and even that of industrial capitalism. Its historical evolution has *everywhere* brought down to our times two major problems: slavery under one disguise or other (forced labor, contract or indentured labor, peonage), and the semi-feudal monopoly of land (mostly connected with the dispossession of the native population). These problems characterize the plantations in our Southern states, as well as in Mexico or in India. In addition to them the excessive development of the plantation system brought about in certain smaller colonies and semi-colonies the evil of mono-culture, which subjects their whole national economy to the violent price fluctuations of one or two crops in the world market. Egypt, the Dutch East Indies, and the Caribbean countries are cases in point.

All these features of the plantation system were already in operation before the advent of imperialism, though by no means were they intensified to the same degree as they are today. In the British West Indies, which is a classical example, after the extermination of the aborigines, white colonists were introduced and given land. With the discovery of the possibilities of sugar cane cultivation, the white colonists were expropriated and Negro slaves imported in large numbers. As far back as the middle of the seventeenth century the smaller islands were turned into huge sugar plantations worked by slave labor and owned by British lords in the metropolis.

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It is, however, when we come to the plantation system as it exists *today in the smaller Caribbean countries* (expressly excluding Mexico) that we are confronted with a phenomenon which has no parallel in world economic history.

Already O. Henry noticed the close relationship existing between "Cabbages and kings" in Latin American tropics. Today the American plantation company (and in some cases the British) virtually dominates the life and death of Caribbean peoples, colonial as well as "independent." It creates international friction, makes and unmakes governments, bribes "whole parliaments," thrusts upon nations laws profitable to it and flaunts other laws which are not to its liking. It defies taxation and often even appropriates government properties, in a word, openly or covertly, the plantation company appears as the absolute ruler of the Caribbean world.

The liberal bourgeois economist has filled volumes with the description of the machinations and wrong-doings of the plantation companies. But wherein lies the source of their omnipotency? This question rarely occurs to him, and when it does he is unable to give any articulate answer. All he can do is to lament the harmful effects of the plantation system and to condemn its existence. One calls it "industrial feudalism,"[1] the other "Latifundism" or "agrarian feudalism,"[2] according to whatever particular trait of the plantation system strikes most the writer. In what seems to be one of the best books produced by bourgeois economists on the subject the author writes: "The expression 'economic vassalage' and 'subjection of the colono (farmer) to a purely feudal system' which we used in the foregoing chapters, are not used in a figurative sense, but directly, literally. One has to lack moral sense and the most elemental notions of justice and patriotism in order to defend such a system in Cuba."[3]

It stands to reason that vituperations like these explain nothing. To find an answer to the question stated above we must turn to Lenin and recall that this is the epoch of *imperialism, of finance capital, of monopolistic capitalism.* Imperialist penetration into the colonies proceeds by different ways, among others also thru the plantation system. But where and when the latter becomes the *prevalent* form of *imperialist* expansion, then in *addition* to all its former characteristics it assumes new features which make it the dominating force in the country concerned. This is exactly what

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[1] Melvine M. Knight, *The Americans in Santo Domingo.* 1928.

[2] Ramira Guerra y Sanchez. *Azucar y poblacion en las Antillas.* 1927.

[3] Ibid. p. 179, footnote.

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happened in the smaller Caribbean countries. The bourgeois liberal who fulminates against the plantations is unable to understand it: he can see the *secondary feudal* traits of the plantation system which are alien to his bourgeois nature, but how is he to perceive that it is the very incarnation of *finance capital*, using all its power and devices in the interest of *monopolistic* exploitation? Yet this is the only correct approach to the important problem presented by the plantation system in the Caribbean area.

THE PLANTATION SYSTEM AS AN ENTERPRISE OF MONOPOLSITIC CAPITALISM

To begin with, the very parentage of the modern plantation company is already imperialist. It is born into the world as the child of banking capital. The bank provides its initial capital, owns and markets its shares. The acquisition of land is often connected with loans to the respective colonial or semi-colonial countries.[4] In the imperialist government it finds its affectionate godfather who exercises in its favor pressure on the government of the country where it intends to carry out its operations.

One of the most characteristic features of the modern plantation companies is their monopolistic control of the means of communication in the Caribbean countries. In 1927 Cuba had 4,840 kilometers (3,025 miles) of public railroads (owned by American and British capital, as against more than 12,000 kilometers of private lines owned by the plantations and valued at about $120,000,000,[5] In Porto Rico there are 346 miles of railroads "owned largely by sugar growers."[6] Of these only two sugar companies own 200 miles. In Costa Rica of 430 miles of railroads, 330 miles are controlled by the United Fruit Company, which also operates 280 miles of tramways.[7] This company owns piers, operates steamship

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[4] *American Direct Investments in Foreign Countries.* U. S. Department of Commerce, Trade Information Bulletin No. 731. 1930. Commenting on American agricultural investments in Cuba and the West Indies the author says: "A good proportion of these probably resulted from previous interests of a purely financial character, such as bank loans, coupled with the hard times experienced by sugar producers about that time." (p. 49).

[5] *Economic Conditions in Cuba.* Department of Overseas Trade (British) 1930. p. 31.

[6] *Survey.* p. 372.

[7] Max Winkler. *Investments of U. S. Capital in Latin America.* 1928. p. 179.

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lines, and in fact controls all means of communications with the outside world in many a Central American republic.

This circumstance is of far reaching importance. The railroad destroys the self sufficiency of the native village and makes it dependent on the world market. At the same time the newly created trade falls into the lap of the owner of the railroad. The plantation company, being part and parcel of finance capital, enters trade, forces out local competitors by refusing them transport facilities and *dictates the prices*. If the exportable article has to pass thru the mill, as in case of sugar cane, the plantation dominates the producer thru the mill as well.

> "According to our Constitution," bitterly complains one Costa Rican writer, "only Congress can authorize taxation. Owner of ships and railroads, the United Fruit Company exercises marine and rail monopolies, collects from Costa Ricans import and export duties through the medium of high freight rates, and collects through its ever-increasing marine passenger rates a head tax on every individual entering or leaving the country. From the individual banana farmers it purchases that part of their production which it desires and at prices that suit best only the company. It may be asserted without fear of contradiction that no inhabitant of Costa Rica—consumer, exporter, tourist, or banana producer escapes contributions which the United's monopolies enable it to collect."[8]

The national bourgeoisie is driven frantic by this all-embracing power of the plantation. To remedy the situation all he can propose is to "enact legislation" which will, he hopes, open the market to free competition and, by bringing another foreign company into the field, destroy the monopoly of the first. It happens, of course, that two foreign companies come to grips for the domination of the local market and sources of raw materials, though not thru the introduction of "legislation" which both of them treat as a scrap of paper. But what happens then? The battle will be fought in many parts of the world. Least of all is this competition likely to reach the market in question. For inside these small subject countries the war between two powerful robbers is least of all waged by economic weapons: freight rates, prices, etc. In the majority of cases the victory depends on the support of the imperialist government, on bribes to local officials, on machinations in the legislatures and similar extra-economic means. The local grafters may get

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[8]We are indebted to Mr. J. H. Soothill for valuable materials and observations on the activities of the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica, which he kindly placed at the disposal of the American Anti-Imperialist League. The materials are further referred to as *mss.*

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better graft. But the small native producer is not only not likely to benefit from the competition, but most probably he will be forced to pay the expenses of the "war."[9]

Up till now we have dealt with those features of the modern plantation system which are common to all big enterprises owned by imperialism in colonial countries. Any bank, any mining or railroad concession can and does get monopolistic control of the colonial market. The plantation however, is a *specific* form of imperialist expansion. Due to its connection with land, it has wider ramifications, penetrates deeper into the heart of the country, comes in direct contact with the bulk of the people, i. e., with the peasantry. This specific character of the plantation intensifies a hundredfold all the forms of exploitation or, better said, plunder, mentioned above; adds to them the direct expropriation of the peasantry and colonial exploitation of labor, and makes the monopolistic control of the plantation more onerous, its domination more oppressive for the subject people than that of any other imperialist enterprise.

The monopolistic nature of the "new" plantation affects and modifies its land policy. An ordinary plantation, typical of the former period (and still largely existing today) grabs land enough to insure the proposed "productive capacity" and its subsequent expansion. The monopolistic plantation acquires land first of all to

[9]In connection with this the following lengthy quotation will repay perusal: "In 1912 the Atlantic Fruit Company came to the country (Costa Rica) with a proposition to purchase fruit, thus promoting healthy competition (sic), with subsequent development of banana cultivation for the country and for the producers. All hopes in the matter, however, were again killed by the United Fruit Company, which prevented organization and development of the business. It shackled the endeavor with an exaggerated embargo against the Atlantic Fruit Company for loss and damage, claimed to have been incurred thru purchase by the latter of fruit previously contracted by the United. Further, if embargoed the Atlantic's fruit about to be loaded aboard steamer in Limon, in order to doubly assure payment of the claim. As many individual farmers not under contract with the United to sell the latter their fruit, were interested in this commerce and desired to see established to the advantage of the entire country an open banana market, the government, by a decision of June 18, 1912, named a commission to thoroughly investigate the affair. That commission, in report of the following July 27th, advised that its work had come to an end as a result of advice received from the Minister of Government, to the effect that the Atlantic Fruit Company had decided to withdraw from competition in the banana business, inasmuch as conditions were too unequal to sustain competition. And so, melancholically ends the writer "the fruit production remained as usual—monopolized by the United." From *Studies and Opinions of Agriculture and Transport Questions, in connection with Foreign Concessions in Costa Rica* (in Spanish), published by the Costa Rican Banana Cooperatives, May 15, 1928, at San Jose, Costa Rica. A study by Dr. Angel Zuniga Huete, translated by J. H. Soothill, *Mss.*

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get a firm foothold in the country and to shut out competitors. The necessity of increasing production is the last consideration to enter its calculations. Thus we see how vast proportions of national territory fall into the hands of the plantations. In Cuba the sugar companies owned and controlled in 1914 about 3 million acres (10.3% of the area of the island).[10] In 1925-26 this figure rose to 5,686,000 acres or approximately 20% of the whole area.[11] In 1928 the whole area owned by American companies was estimated as 6,274,000 acres.[12] In Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) "perhaps one sixth of the 12 million acres of its surface is inhabited—coastal and valley land. Sugar estates own something like a quarter of the best of this," which is an underestimate, as the same author gives 438,000 acres as the property of only the principal sugar estates in 1925.[13] In Porto Rico the total area directly owned by 477 corporations and companies in 1917 was 766,396 acres (cuerdas) which is more than one-half of the total cultivable area (1,500,000 acres) of the island.[14]

These huge land estates owned by American capital in the West Indies and in Central America undoubtedly account for a considerable proportion of direct American investments in the agriculture of these countries (particularly in sugar centrals), estimated as follows:[15]

Central America	$70,831,000
Cuba	
Sugar	544,012,000
Fruit and other	30,988,000
West Indies	
Sugar	69,903,000
Fruit and other	19,096,000
Total	$734,830,000

Nothing could be farther from the truth than to assume that all this land is used for large scale production. In Porto Rico, the whole importation of agricultural machinery and supplies is in total

[10] *The Cane Sugar Industry.* U. S. Department of Commerce. Miscellaneous Series. No. 53. p. 25.

[11] *Azucar y poblacion en las Antillas.* p. 71.

[12] *Our Cuban Colony.* Leland H. Jenks. p. 287. 1928.

[13] *Americans in Santo Domingo.* p. 140.

[14] F. M. Zeno. *Cuestions Sociales; El Obrero Agricola de Puerto Rico.* p. 83. These figures are somewhat at variance with those quoted in the previous article from the *Survey.*

[15] *American Direct Investments in Foreign Countries.* p. 18.

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value equal to the aggregated net profits of only three largest sugar companies.[16]

Still more indicative is the source of supply of agricultural produce. In Cuba in 1930, 65% of the total sugar produced in the island came from "mill colonos," i. e., tenants of the sugar plantation companies, as against 18.5% directly raised by the mills (so-called administration cane) and 16.5% supplied by outside farmers.[17] In Porto Rico the major part of the cane comes also from colonos, in some centrals over two-thirds of it comes from this source. In Panama, the United Fruit Company owns an area of 125,000 acres of which only about 40,000 acres are under bananas and cacao.[18] Still more remarkable is the case of Costa Rica. A well informed observer estimates that only about 20% of the bananas exported by the United Fruit Company from his country come from its farms; 80% are produced by outside farmers, while the extensive holdings of the company largely remain idle.[19] Here we see another characteristic of the modern plantation.

As is well known, agriculture in general is a very unstable industry. Violent fluctuations in the world prices of tropical products coupled with natural phenomena in these countries (climatic conditions, pests, etc.) makes tropical agriculture a particularly hazardous affair. In manufacturing industry, the fall in prices is passed on by the capitalist to the worker thru slashes in wages. In tropical agriculture the laborer is all the time on the verge of starvation, and decreases in wages, tho they are constantly made and mean everything to the worker, are not nearly sufficient to assure to the company the steady flow of super-profits which it expects from its tropical investments. Besides, the concentration of large labor forces which is the first prerequisite of large scale production is all but unpalatable to the foreign capitalist. The problem is solved thru the preservation and even creation, when necessary, of a class of tenants. The risk of both bad prices and bad crops is passed on to the peasant farmer. The plantation collects the produce from him on its own conditions. It is the case of "heads I win, tails you lose." In this way the company reaps the profits without taking the trouble of

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[16] In 1928 the value of agricultural machinery and supplies imported into Porto Rico was 5.5 million dollars or only 6 per cent of total imports; while the combined net profits of these sugar companies amounted in 1927 to $5,200,000, rising, in the case of one Central Aguirre Company with 2.5 million dollars profits to 69 per cent of its capital investment! *Survey.* pp. 407 and 641.

[17] *The International Sugar Journal.* London. March, 1931. p. 103.

[18]. Max Winkler. p. 261.

[19]H. Soothill. *Mss.*

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going itself into production. This means that the plantation system impoverishes the peasant, but does not change the small peasant economy with all its waste and inefficiency, antiquated methods of production, etc. The imperialists themselves are forced to admit this;

> "Evidences of soil exhaustion have presented themselves in all the staple crop regions of Porto Rico, as a result of long occupancy and tillage, continued cultivation of the same crop, in the same localities, and the tenancy system. . . . To quote from a report of the director of the experiment station of Porto Rico, made several years ago but still true today: 'the tenant having a lease of land for only a few years, it is not to his interest to build up the land and, as a result a destructive system of cultivation is adopted which leaves the land at the end of the term in an impoverished condition.' " [20]

To give the plantation companies their due, when they do take up large scale production they behave with the land much worse than the peasant tenant. In 1929 the President of Costa Rica in connection with the removal by the United Fruit Company of a whole railroad with a mileage of 125 miles, which left a whole region without means of communication, said: "All the banana and cacao farms of the company have disappeared and with them the edifices; at the same time and as a consequence, the territory has been depopulated to a large extent. Thus the line has for the company practically no commercial value and it has decided to salvage the material."[21] The explanation of this barbaric deed is that extensive cultivation exhausts banana lands in about ten years. The company calculates accordingly the amortization of its whole capital outlay together with handsome super-profits on a ten year basis and—after that deluge—it transfers its depredations elsewhere.

What do all these facts show? They reveal to a remarkable degree the *parasitic* nature of the new plantation which is quite in keeping with its monopolistic character. The company's hold on its peasant tenants derives not only from its monopoly on land, and it is far more comprehensive than that of the semi-feudal landlord; the latter appropriates the surplus product of the peasant, the plantation thru its monopolies and contracts imposed on the farmer, dominates his whole production. What gigantic profits can be cleared even when the bulk of the produce comes from outside farmers is shown by a Costa Rican writer who calculates that the United Fruit Company, buying bananas from the Costa Rican pro-

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[20] *Survey*. p. 634.

[21] Translated by H. Soothill. *Mss.*

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ducer at an average of 50c and selling at $3.00 a bunch, has received from the sales in 28 years $778,000,000 of which only $125,000,000 went to the producer![22]

* * * *

Lenin, speaking of the causes of the Russian Revolution of 1905, points out "the contradiction which deeper than anything else explains the revolution: the most backward system of landownership, the most savage village—the most advanced industrial and finance capitalism." This contradiction is magnified a hundred fold in the Caribbean countries. The super-structure of finance capital, *foreign* finance capital!, in the form of the plantation system, with its monopolies and parasitism is here *directly* imposed on the backward colonial countryside, bleeding it white and lowering the peasantry to the level of slaves. In fact the whole country is transformed into a chattel which, in the words of the Colonial Theses of the 6th World Congress of the C. I.:

> "is compelled to sacrifice the interests of its independent development and to play the part of an economic (agrarian—raw material) appendage of foreign capitalism."

THE PLANTATION SYSTEM AND MONOCULTURE

The excessive development of the plantation system is generally accompanied by the transformation of the country concerned into a "one-crop" country. To what extent monoculture prevails in the Caribbean area can be seen from the following table:

Country	*Chief Article of Export*	*Percentage of Total Export*
Costa Rica	Coffee	50
Costa Rica	Bananas	35
Cuba	Sugar	75-80
Dominican Republic	Sugar	60
Guatemala	Coffee	80
Haiti	Coffee	80
Honduras	Bananas	75-80
Nicaragua	Coffee	45
Porto Rico	Sugar	50

When the whole national economy of a small country depends on the export of one crop, a drop of a few cents in the price of this product may bring it greater disaster than an earthquake. The fall in prices of agricultural products has affected the Caribbean countries long before the present crisis began. Particularly the

[22]Ibid. These figures may not be precise, but they are sufficiently indicative.

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price of sugar has been declining steadily since 1924. What this means to Cuba as a whole can be seen from the following figures:

Years	*Total Exports*	*Exports of Sugar*	*Sugar Exported (in lbs.)*
1924	$434,865,000	$374,496,000	8,750,427
1929	272,440,000	188,636,000	10,271,686

In spite of an increase in the volume of sugar exported which, valued at the price of 1924, ought to bring in a total of $439,584,000 there was an actual drop in total value of exports of $162,425,000 or 38% in five years. How this reacts on the conditions of the toiling masses in Cuba we shall see later.

THE PLANTATION SYSTEM AND THE AGRARIAN CRISIS

The present agrarian crisis has not only brought about a breakdown of the national economy of the small Caribbean countries, it dealt a formidable blow to the plantation system itself. Thru international agreements (Chadbourne plan) or without them, the company may curtail production on its own farms, "rationalize" them by throwing tens of thousands of laborers into the street, and drastically cutting down the wages of the rest, and refuse to accept the produce of the peasants, thus ruining them wholesale. But what is to be done with the idle lands quitted by the tenants and "freed" from production? What is to be done with its railways and ships which mainly depend on the staple crop for freight, and with its investments in trade? The crisis has turned the very monopolistic privileges of the plantation system into a boomerang which is now striking at its roots.

How do the American imperialists propose to extricate the plantation system from the deep abyss in which it has fallen? For enlightenment on this subject we may turn to a pamphlet published by the United States Department of Commerce, under the title "Cuban Readjustment to Current Economic Forces."[23] This supposed statistical study is a remarkable production, as a piece of imperialist propaganda. It is still more remarkable as a bundle of lies which make one wonder whether to admire the resourcefulness of the author or the shamelessness with which they are told.

The "readjustment" of Cuba to the present crisis as seen by the author can be formulated in the following theses:

First, he notes the development of self-sufficient national economy "from the informal individual production of diverse foodstuffs by

[23] *Trade Information Bulletin.* No. 725. 1930.

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the agricultural workers—a basic development of great ultimate importance—to the more formal enterprises of increasing large scale production of certain new crops and manufactures." (Page 1).

Second, "an investigation of the growth of national industries in Cuba shows that both production and consumption of some of these manufactures and commodities showing declines (in importations) practically equivalent to disappearance of importations, have expanded so sharply as to compel the belief that the growth of domestic production considerably exceeds the amount of the decline in importations," (Page 11). In other words, the consumption of the Cuban population not only did not decrease with the crisis, but on the contrary expanded.

With regard to the first thesis the author explains:

> "When sugar brought its yearly income counted in hundreds of millions of dollars, not only the Cuban colono, but even the humblest agricultural worker in the sugar industry scorned to devote effort to the production of any part of his food supply around his home." (Page 4.)

Let us see, how far this is true. The habits of the American exploiters and the necessities of the agricultural workers are the same in Cuba as in Porto Rico. Here is what the often quoted *Survey* says with regard to Porto Rico:

> "Upon some of the American owned and managed fruit plantations there is a definite insistence that the resident laborers raise some garden crops for themselves; land is provided them for the purpose. Upon other plantations such efforts are discouraged, and upon some they are definitely forbidden." (Page 28.)

The point, however, is that the latter category includes the sugar plantations which are of greatest importance both in Porto Rico and in Cuba! It is also worth noting how the agricultural laborer is "encouraged" to raise crops for himself. An inquiry into the holdings of 1,209 agricultural laborers on coffee and tobacco plantations in Porto Rico revealed that all told they cultivated 413.5 acres, of which 318 were on a share cropping basis (mostly on halves), averaging .342 acre per family. These figures fall down in the sugar cane areas to 51 acres for 671 families with an average of .0076 of an acre per family! (ibid.)

The explanation of the honorable official from the Department of Commerce is a plain lie. The purpose behind it is the desire of the plantation companies to liberate themselves of the dead weight of idle land which they plundered in times of "prosperity," by leasing it out to agricultural workers and "benefiting" them . . . on a

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share cropping basis! This is the real motive behind the imperialist propaganda for "diversification of agriculture" which is the main trend of the pamphlet. The Porto Rican governor is also in favor of "diversification." He even proposes buying "cheap land from large holders and using it for homesteading purposes." He continues:

> "We are in an excellent position to do this now (note: now!), for due to the economic depression many of the large land holders in the interior will gladly sell at moderate prices one-half of their land in order to obtain funds to rehabilitate the balance. There is also a large tract whose owners are in Europe and who have never been on the island. This we will either buy or condemn." [24]

This is another example of how the sugar plantations urged by the crisis intend to "weed" out the worst lands by turning them over to the peasants who eventually will be forced to pay a good price for the "sands," as Lenin used to say.

How does the present crisis tell on the broad masses of the people? The answer to this question is connected with the second thesis of the pamphlet quoted above.

We must bear in mind that the food supply of the monocultural countries of the Caribbean is largely dependent on foreign imports. In 1928 the share of foodstuffs in the total imports of Cuba was 37%, in Porto Rico 32%. The drastic decline in the export of these countries has been inevitably accompanied by a similar decline in importation of foodstuffs. A few figures will substantiate this:[25]

IMPORTS INTO CUBA

(*in thousands of pounds*)

Item	1924	1929
Potatoes	290,979	187,508
Coffee	35,920	18,489
Tasajo (dried meat)	50,548	18,045
Salt Pork	53,292	35,299
Lard	103,557	80,856
Wheat Flour	276,560	246,513

All these articles are imported for mass consumption. The imperialist official supplementing these figures of declined importations with make-believe evaluations construes that imported foodstuffs have been superseded and even surpassed by local production. This is another fairy tale. In certain cases he unwittingly exposes himself. Thus, for instance, "the consumption of coffee is about at a maximum in Cuba; it has probably declined as a result of hard

[24] *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Government of Porto Rico.* 1930. p. 5.
[25] *Cuban Readjustment, etc.* p. 79.

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times" (page 15). "The importation of Tasajo has fallen off 26,337,000 in five years with a manufacture of Tasajo in Cuba of only 682,000 pounds in 1929 to make up the difference, indicating a large increase in home consumption of fresh beef (make-believe!), even considering a large drop in consumption because of lower purchasing power." (Page 18.)

There is, however, no need to surprise the worthy official in his unguarded moments. The wages of the agricultural laborer have fallen both in Cuba and in Porto Rico (as well as in all other Caribbean countries) to 30-40 cents a day and less. In Porto Rico, "more than 60% of the people are out of employment either all or a part of each year!!"[26] in Cuba the number of unemployed runs into hundreds of thousands. At the same time the custom duties on imported foodstuffs have been considerably raised by Machado, supposedly for protection of home agriculture, in reality to replenish, at least partly, the depleted treasury. It is a maxim known even to Ramsay MacDonald, who is not particularly strong in political economy, that, when a country depends largely on imported food stuffs, a rise in tariffs invariably leads to a rise in prices. Thus the toiling masses of the Caribbean countries are paying for the crimes of the monopolistic plantation system imposed on them by American imperialism the double penalty—of slashed wages and incomes and of an increased cost of living. The result of the present crisis is literal starvation. The Porto Rican governor states in his report: some 60% of the children were greatly undernourished, many of them on the verge of starvation" (Page 3). Yet the "sympathetic" official of the Commerce Department has the brutal arrogance to declare that "five long years of progressive depression have been passed without widespread misery" and "this same worker . . . with his family . . . continue well nourished and happy!" (Page 5.)

These are the ways and means whereby the American imperialists intend to transfer the disastrous effects of the crisis on the shoulders of the working class and the peasantry of the Caribbean countries. How far they will succeed in this, only the development of the class struggle in these countries can tell. But the very nature of these remedies only tends to enlarge the scope of the peasant problem in the Carribean, emphasizes the parasitic character of the plantation system and make its monopolistic domination and plunder still more unbearable for the large masses of Caribbean peoples.

(*Concluded in next issue*)

[26] Governor's *Report*. p. 2.

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An Unemployment Manifesto During the Crisis of 1873

Editorial Note by ALEXANDER TRACHTENBERG

In connection with the gathering of material dealing with the origin and development of the revolutionary labor movement in the United States which was undertaken by the decision of the VII Convention of the Party, we shall reprint from time to time in the *Communist* documents representative of the various periods through which the movement has passed. The Communist movement is the inheritor of the revolutionary traditions of the American working class and it is the task of the Party to interpret these traditions to the workers of the present generation and to employ these traditions for the advancement of the revolutionary movement of today.

We are reproducing below an Unemployment Manifesto issued in leaflet form by the Federal Council of the North American Federation of the International Workingmen's Association, usually known as the First International. The N. A. Federation combined all sections of the First International in the U. S. and was organized in 1872, the year the headquarters of the International were moved to New York.

The Manifesto was issued in the winter of 1873 at the time when the effects of the economic crisis were making themselves felt deeply among the workers. Over three million unemployed were suffering from the ravages of unemployment—a large number for that period. The crisis was the severest in the history of the country which had by that time known a number of financial panics and industrial depressions. Hunger stalked through the land with whole families dying daily from starvation. The crisis continued for several years. The employers took advantage of the situation and inaugurated a wage-slashing campaign throughout the country. They also aimed at the destruction of the labor unions which the workers succeeded in building up during the years following the Civil War. The workers soon responded with a counter-offensive, and it was during these years that some of the most militant struggles took place. The anthracite miners' strike of 1875 which the coal barons later avenged by sending a score of militant miners to the gallows (Molly Maguires), the great railroad strikes

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of 1877 which took place at several railroad centers and in which the federal troops were used to help defeat the workers, are epochal struggles in the history of the American labor movement and were a direct result of the unemployment and the employers' offensive during the crisis period of 1873-1878. The present crisis with the accompanying wage cuts and general attack upon the standard of living of the workers will call forth struggles on the part of the workers just as they did 55 years ago under similar conditions and it behooves the Party and the revolutionary unions to be prepared for leadership and active participation in the struggles that are ahead of us.

The honorable Ham. Fish and the no less honorable Mat. Woll would have the American workers believe that if it were not for the Russian Bolsheviks, peace and tranquility would reign on the class front of the United States. When the Unemployment Manifesto printed below was issued, Alexander II was still the Tsar of all the Russias, Lenin was only three years old and Stalin was not yet born. The American workers then too had Fishes and Wolls who tried to mislead them, but they also had courageous and militant leaders who counselled not class peace, but class struggle and led them into action against the bosses even as the Communists do today.

A reading of the Manifesto will show it was written in simple style. Although the language is somewhat flowery, it is not difficult, and was quite in keeping with the language employed in writings at that time. The Manifesto tells about the extent of unemployment, about the shifting of the burdens of the crisis onto the backs of the workers and derides the notion of the identity of interests between capital and labor—"the two poles of present society." It speaks of capital "wielding the whole power of the state" and exposes the war propaganda under the pretext of freedom for Cuba—25 years before the war with Spain took place under the cover of the same pretext. A "vigorous foreign policy" was always the tactic of capitalist governments to divert the attention of the masses from conditions at home.

After declaring that workers want work and not charity, the Manifesto proposes a program of action containing demands which are almost identical with those advanced today by the organized unemployed workers. The workers are importuned to form *block committees* in the working class neighborhoods—an organizational device which is still considered efficacious, if employed and unemployed workers are to be involved in the movement. Then follow three concrete demands made upon the city authorities—demands

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which one might think were copied from some recent leaflet issued in behalf of the unemployed of 1931.

First, there is the demand for *work or wages without reduction in pay and on the basis of the 8-hour day*. The 8-hour provision was an advanced slogan, as the workers were to fight for it on a national scale only 10 or 12 years later.

Second, there is the demand for *immediate relief for the unemployed, in money or produce*. And finally, the demand that *no evictions take place during the following six months*, rounds out the concrete part of the program of this Manifesto issued by the American Section of the First International.

That these demands had behind them the will to fight can be seen from what occurred within a few weeks after the Manifesto was issued. On January 13, 1874, an unemployment demonstration was staged in Tompkins Square, New York. (Union Square had not yet become the center of labor demonstrations.) This was the largest labor demonstration New York had witnessed. The police first issued a permit for the demonstration, but, sensing its magnitude, revoked their permission the day before the demonstration. The workers disregarded the police orders and filled the square from one end to the other. Police brutally attacked the assemblage and broke up the demonstration by their superior force. George McNeill, a contemporary, writes about this demonstration in his history of the early labor movement:

"When the square was completely filled with men, women and children, without a moment's warning the police closed upon them on all sides. People rushed from the gates and then through the streets, followed by the mounted officers at full speed, charging upon them without provocation. Screams of women and children rent the air and the blood of many stained the streets." All of which is quite reminiscent of the unemployment demonstrations at City Hall last year, except that Mayor Walker was not present to inquire when ice cream would be served.

MANIFESTO

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION

TO THE WORKING PEOPLE OF NORTH AMERICA!

FELLOW WORKINGMEN!

The present conditions of society have virtually become a repetition of the brutalities and barbarism of the middle ages.

At those dark times the laborers and industrials were forced by

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sheer violence to give up the results of their labor to the highwaymen. That was the nobility of the country, who despised labor but considered it a good thing and quite honorable to live on the labor of others. All political power, the making and executing of laws, being monopolized by those highwaymen themselves, by the nobility, there was no redress for the producing classes, no law to protect them.

Our actual situation is precisely similar. The present nobility are those highwaymen, called great industrials, railroads and manufacturing companies and the like, who consider it quite as natural and fair, as the noblemen of the middle ages, to live and prosper on the work of others, taking special care for spreading the cloth of legality over their ill-gotten gains and protecting by law not only their treasures, the products of labor appropriated by them, but even the swindling operations of those unholy speculators bent upon realizing hundreds of millions at once.

Now, workingmen, where is your share of these millions? What part of these treasures is alloted to those who create them all?

Your share is the misery resulting from being thrown out of work by the failure of the wild speculation of the ruling class! The part of treasures alloted to you are the shallow phrases of our modern noblemen and reduced wages if you are working.

These evils have grown to such an extent that today there are hundreds of thousands of workingmen, without employment and consequently without means to support themselves and their families, who are suffering for want of the necessities of life. And this state of helplessness, fellow workingmen, is it not maintained greatly by your own fault?

Have you not listened so long and patiently to the siren voices of the capitalists and their mouth pieces, the press, singing the chant of harmony between capital and labor, identity of interests between those two poles of present society? Alas! you lent your ears too long to those captivating tones of harmony, clouds surrounded your judgment, and you closed your ears to the warning voice of your fellow workers, of those of your co-laborers, who told you always and will tell you ever: There is no harmony between capital and labor, but strife, incessant strife, only to be ended by the complete subjugation of one or the other, and the only way to guard against the subjugation of labor, to advance the interest of workingmen is to organize the forces of labor, to combine and centralize them. Capital, organized and wielding the whole power of the state, can never be conquered or brought to terms by the unorganized disconnected masses of labor. To avoid the fate of slaves all working-

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men must organize, combine their forces, increase their numbers and centralize their powers.

The criminal practices of the wealthy classes and the corrupt connivance of the government have brought about the present disasters and disturbances of credit and business, whose consequences are adroitly shifted on the shoulders of the working masses. The workingmen are dismissed and thrown on the street, cold and hunger staring in their faces and inviting them to examine that boasted harmony between capital and labor. Want of solidarity amongst ourselves has given our capitalist rulers the opportunity to act as they like. The absence of fraternal bonds of Union between the manifold divisions of labor has prevented successful resistance to the encroachments of capital till now. Shall this state of degradation continue forever? No, workingmen, no! Workingmen, don't be deluded by the phrases of your oppressors! They will preach free trade for the benefit of the working classes, but enact a protective tariff. They will talk of equality before the law, but make laws against your organization. They will assert the inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness but live in luxury, whilst you are deprived of the necessities of life. They will chant liberty but drill their mercenaries for assaulting and crushing you. They will praise justice, but build prisons and poorhouses for you, and this last is certainly that business wherein they manifest earnestly and without reserve their good will and sincere intentions towards you. During the last few days, the whole capitalist press shouted war against Spain, liberty for Cuba! The cry of distress of the working people must be overhauled and the war—a men-slaughtering en masse—is another blessing of the governing class to the benefit of labor.

Should not the workingmen be thankful for so much benevolence?

Why, the benevolence itself is an insult to the working class, who have earned by the sweat of their brow the right to demand, not to beg, what is their due. The workingmen don't want charity, but work, they scorn alms, but claim the products of their labor or its equivalents, for securing a human existence to themselves and families. Our watchword therefore will be: fair work—fair living and woe to the traducers and oppressors of labor.

Organize then, fellow workingmen, unite and combine to form a living wall such as will be able to withstand the storms from whatever quarter they may come—and the extortion of capital and the misery of labor will belong to the past—and our children and grandchildren will bless the day of our union, the great union of all workingmen.

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We submit and recommend to you the following plan of organization, put into effect already successfully by our German fellow-workers:

The workingmen of one, two or more blocks form a district club, the district clubs combine to form Ward committees, the Ward committees will form a central body by deputizing three (3) delegates from every such Ward committee.

The united workingmen thus organized will make the following demands to the respective authorities.

1) Work to be provided for all those willing and able to work, at the usual wages and on the 8 hours plan.

2) An advance of either money or produce, sufficient for one week's sustenance, to be made to laborers and their families in actual distress.

3) No ejectment from lodging to be made for non-payment of rent, from December 1st, 1873 to May 1st, 1874.

More than 200,000 workingmen are residing in New York, and the same proportions are existing in almost every city and state of this country. Would it not be an easy thing for this vast majority of the adult citizens to put a stop to the vile practices of capital, to the greediness and the pillaging habits of our modern highwaymen? Could or would any authorities, legislative or executive, be bold enough to resist our demands, if sustained by the undivided front of the laboring masses?

FELLOW WORKINGMEN AROUSE AND UNITE!

By order of the Federal Council, N. A., Federation, I. W. A.

F. BOLTE, *Sec.*

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Engels on "Justice"

NOTE: At the May Day meeting of the Socialists in New York, one placard read: "We want Justice, Jobs or Job Insurance." The Socialists give the workers the choice—if they can't get jobs or job insurance, they can perhaps get "Justice"—under the capitalist system, of course. What this choice amounts to, and how such a posing of the question exposes the capitalist character of the basis of present-day "Socialism," was clearly analyzed by Friedrich Engels away back in 1878, in *Herrn Eugen Duehrings Umwaelzung der Wissenschaft*. In the following quotation from this book, Engels holds up to ridicule those "Socialists" who pin their faith to "Justice." This book was issued in English by Charles H. Kerr under the title of *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism*, and is popularly called *Anti-Duehring*. The translation, however, is so incomplete and faulty that an accurate and complete edition is now being prepared in English. It is one of the fundamental works of Marxian philosophy, and should be studied by everyone who wishes to become a real Marxist.

The following is a new translation of pages 3-4, and 161-162 of the German edition issued by Dietz, 1923.—GERTRUDE HAESSLER.

SPEAKING of the three great Utopians, Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen, Engels says:

Like the philosophers of enlightenment (*Aufklaerer*), they wish to liberate not a specific class, but entire mankind. Like them, they wish to usher in the realm of reason and of everlasting justice; but there is a world of difference between their realm and that of the philosophers of enlightenment. In their eyes the bourgeois world established on the principles of these philosophers of enlightenment is also unreasonable and unjust and therefore is also destined for the rubbish heap, just as feudalism and all former social systems. That real reason and justice have hitherto never reigned in the world, arises merely from the fact that they were heretofore never properly understood. The one genius, who has now appeared and who has understood the truth, was missing. The fact that he has arisen just at this particular time, the fact that truth has only now come to be understood, is not an inevitable phenomenon arising from a combination of historical development and necessity, but a stroke of pure luck. He might just as well have been born 500 years ago, and could thus have spared mankind 500 years of error, conflict, and suffering.

This is essentially the point of view of all the British and French and the earlier German Socialists, including Weitling. Socialism is

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the expression of absolute truth, reason, and justice, and needs only to be discovered to conquer the world by its own inherent force. And since absolute truth is independent of time, space, and the historical development of mankind, it is pure chance when and where it will be discovered. Thus absolute truth, reason, and justice vary with every founder of every new school; and since each special variety of absolute truth, reason, and justice of each individual is in turn conditioned by his subjective methods of reasoning, his conditions of life, and the extent of his knowledge and mental training, there can be no other solution of this conflict of absolute truths than that they mutually wear one another down. Thus nothing more could come of this than a sort of eclectic average socialism, which, in fact, is the prevailing conception of most of the Socialist workers in France and England today—a mixture admitting of the most manifold shadings, composed of the less striking critical opinions, economic precepts and conceptions of the future society of the founders of various sects—a mixture which is brought about all the more easily, in proportion as the sharp edges of precision of its component parts are smoothed down in the stream of debate, like pebbles rubbed smooth in a brook. In order to make Socialism into a science, it has first to be put upon a material basis.

* * * *

If we had no better assurance for the oncoming revolution of the present method of distribution of the products of labor, with all its shrieking contrasts of misery and voluptuousness, of hunger and gluttony, than the consciousness that this method of distribution is unjust, and that justice will finally prevail, then we would be in a bad way, and would have a long wait ahead. The medieval mystics, dreaming of the coming thousand years' golden age, also felt the injustice of the class antagonisms. At the threshold of modern industry, 350 years ago, Thomas Muenzer shouted it from the house-tops. In the British and in the French bourgeois revolution, the same cry rings out—and dies away. And if now this call to destroy the class antagonisms and class distinctions, which had left the toiling and suffering masses unresponsive up to 1830, finds a million echoes, if it grips one land after another, keeping pace with the development of large industry, if it grips them with an intensity in proportion as this industry develops, if now in one generation it has conquered a power which defies all powers united against it, and can feel certain of victory in the near future—how does this come about? It arises from the fact that modern great industry has created on one hand a proletariat, a class which for the first time

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in history puts forward the demand of the abolition not of this or that special class organization, or this or that special class prerogative, but the destruction of classes in general; a class which by its very social position is compelled to carry through this demand under penalty of sinking to the level of the Chinese coolies. And it arises also from the fact that in the bourgeoisie this same great industry has created on the other hand a class possessing a monopoly of all means of production and necessaries of life, but which, in every period of boom, and in every crisis following thereupon, demonstrates over again that the productive forces have developed beyond their power to control, a class under whose leadership society is dashing headlong to ruin, like a locomotive on which the engineer is too weak to release the jammed throttle. In other words, it arises from the fact that the productive forces brought forth by the modern capitalist mode of production as well as the system of distribution created by it have come into burning contradiction with the method of production itself, and to such a degree that the overthrow of these methods of production and distribution must bring about the abolition of all class distinctions, unless the whole of modern society is to go under. It is on this obvious material fact, which because of dire necessity is now becoming more or less clearly evident to the exploited proletariat, and not on some conception of justice or injustice of this or that arm-chair philosopher, that the certainty of victory of modern Socialism is based.

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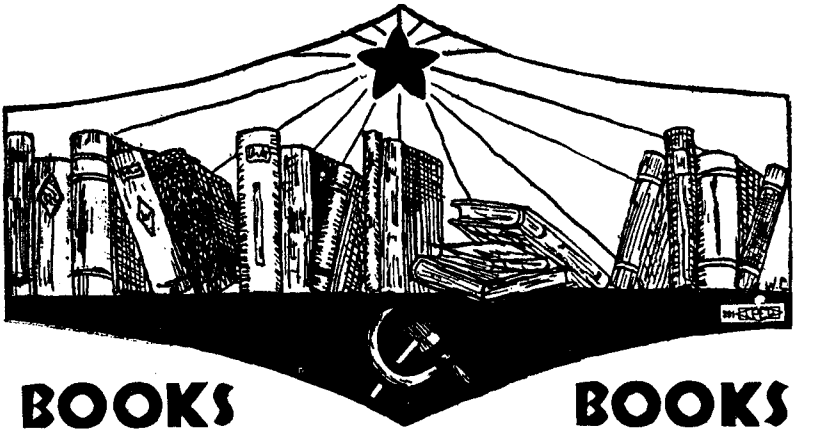

LIGHT ON COAL

LABOR AND COAL. ANNA ROCHESTER. New York, International Publishers. Labor and Industry Series. 1931. pp. 255.

Reviewed by BERT GRANT

From its opening statement that "at least 850,000 workers have been permanently frozen out of the coal mining industry in Great Britain, Germany, and the United States," to its concluding clarion call to the mine workers of the country "to see their struggles against this world-wide background of class conflict and to throw their great fighting power with the revolutionary forces of the working class," this book keeps the reader engrossed.

Were you ever down in a mine? No clearer description of the conditions which menace life, limb, and health in the dank darkness a mile or more beneath ground has ever been written. The falls of rock or coal, the explosions, the traffic accidents which in 10 years wiped out 22,500 American miners and injured 1,500,000 more are vividly pictured. The fatal accident rate for this best of all capitalist countries is shown to be twice that of Germany and three times that of Great Britain. Recent mechanical changes and speed-up have increased the risk. The federal government makes no pretense of enforcing safety provisions, and the puny state laws only aid the slaughter.

What red-blooded worker can calmly take the revelation that out of miners' sweat and lives the mine owners and operators even in depression years coin over $59,000,000 in "dividends," $37,000,000 in "interest," and $34,000,000 in "rents" and "royalties"? Yet this cool total of over $130,000,000 yearly represents an "unsatisfactory" return to the capitalist class because of over-expansion and over-capitalization of the industry. Several neat examples show how figures are juggled so that money-making coal companies appear to take a loss instead of a profit. The drive for even greater profits is leading to drastic cuts in working force by machine methods, lengthening of hours, speed-up, and heavy wage cuts. But the more the new methods increase production, the more they increase the difficulties of an already "over-developed" industry.

Again, it is impossible to read without shame the documented record of the A. F. of L. United Mine Workers' betrayals of the men in the pits. Bar-

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gaining vs. militancy was the keynote of the leaders' policy. "Practically all of the U. M. W. A. officials have been capitalists at heart," says the author, and backs up the statement with the pedigrees of one president after another turned mine operator. John Mitchell's career is deftly traced, from sold-out strike to sold-out strike, to his decease with an estate of "$250,000, largely in coal, railroad, and steel company securities." Padding of payrolls, use of official funds to pack conventions, and outright murder, are recorded as the weapons of business-like officials in maintaining their grip on the union. The Socialists in the U. M. W. A. are shown up as inconsistent, weak, and corruptible. No better showing is made by Howat, Dorchy, Brophy, and other "progressives" who from time to time have flickered before the miners' eyes.

Finally it is with a glow of pride in one's class that a revolutionary worker lays down the volume after following the brilliant record of struggles put up by the rank and file miners for improved conditions. The maligned Molly Maguires, the Hocking Valley strike of 1884, the nation-wide walkout of 1897, the fight at Virden, the Western Federation of Miners in its early days, the Colorado struggles culminating in Ludlow, the West Virginia armed march, pass in rousing review. The healthy revolt against Lewis's business bargaining (with the operators) and bold betrayals (of the miners) logically leads to the launching of the National Miners Union, with its revolutionary outlook and its militant struggle for practical demands. A brief description of miners' conditions in Soviet Russia demonstrates what miners here can attain through correct revolutionary leadership and struggle.

Like all the Labor and Industry series, prepared by the Labor Research Association and issued by International Publishers, the book is illustrated and well indexed. It can not be very well carried in a miner's cap; yet it should cast a flood of light throughout the mine field by which the coal digger can fight his way to emancipation.

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